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midweek
newspaper

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Issue No 88

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THE NEWSPAPER FOR MAIDSTONE, MALLING, LARKFIELD AND SURROUNDING VILLAGES



MONEY MATTERS

Our pull-out guide on ways to
make your money go further

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Top tips to help you feel good



WE'RE NOT GANG OF CROOKS, SAYS MP

WHAT'S ON & WATCH

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SHOWTIME: The Living Land Show at Detling
attracted large crowds. Search 'land'

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ISSN 1753-121-7



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Picture IGOR KUPCO

RACING TO SAVE LIVES

This young lady joined her mother in braving the English weather as the Race for Life fundraising events got under way in Maidstone at the weekend.

Claudia, six, and mum Susan, both from Maidstone, united with thousands of women for this year's first race in Mote Park on Sunday. About 4,000 entrants walked, jogged or ran the 5k course to raise funds for Cancer Research UK.

FULL STORY AND MORE PICTURES ON PAGE 4

■ BY ANNA WHITE

TOUGH-talking Ann Widdecombe has criticised MPs who have abused the expenses system.

The Daily Telegraph newspaper this week uncovered the allowances claimed by Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat MPs.

Miss Widdecombe, pictured, Conservative MP for Maidstone and Weald, has spoken out against the named MPs who have used their expenses for extravagant items such as wide-screen televisions or swimming pools.

The former Shadow Home Secretary, who will retire at the next general election, told Yourmaidstone she is concerned that the revelations have given all MPs a bad reputation.

Miss Widdecombe said: "The public are fed up and confused. This has made us all look like crooks, when we are certainly not."

Although Miss Widdecombe supports some of Tory leader David Cameron's suggestions to regain control of his party's expenses, she does not agree with his suggestion to change the allowance to maintain MPs' second homes.

The Daily Telegraph reported that Miss Widdecombe claimed £598.97 in December 2004 to "drain heating system and install new radiator in lounge" at her designated second home in Kent.

She said: "Some of what David Cameron has said is very good, but not that we can only use

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



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WHAT'S ON & WATCH

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TOP TV CLIPS



1 Thousands were in Faversham at the weekend for its annual classic cars show. **Search 'cars'**



2 Thanet South Conservative candidate Laura Sandys' warning over large-scale GP clinics. **Search 'Sandys'**



3 Gills boss Mark Stimson looks ahead to the play-off final at Wembley. **Search 'Gillingham'**

SEE OUR SISTER PAPERS **KENT ON SUNDAY** AND THE **SATURDAY EDITION** FOR ALL THE WEEKEND'S COUNTY NEWS AND SPORT

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Heating repair delays alarm plaza residents

EXCLUSIVE

BY ANNA WHITE

RESIDENTS of newly-built flats are still waiting for repairs to their homes seven months after being warned they were at risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Owners and tenants at the Riverside Plaza in Hart Street, Maidstone, received precautionary letters from developer Barratt Homes in September last year, Yourmaidstone exclusively reported.

A resident at the development contacted this paper after being alarmed by a letter telling occupants they needed to contact British Gas urgently to have their central heating checked or face having their gas supply capped.

But the same resident, who lives with a flatmate, has spoken to Yourmaidstone again after being contacted by the developers last week to say a five-day check is needed to examine the flue pipe on the boiler.

He said: "We were told by our letting agent that Barratts had organised for somebody to come and carry out work on the boiler flue less than a week before they were due to do it.

"They said it would take five days to complete, which suggests to me there's major work needed."

Barratt Homes appointed British Gas – which did not fit the central heating systems – to carry out the checks last year as a precaution as it was "identified that an installation in one home was not in compliance with manufacturers' instructions".

In the letter, the developer assured residents the heating system was installed and commissioned by an independent Corgi-registered engi-



RIVERSIDE PLAZA: Residents have been alarmed by central heating problems

neer and therefore would have been legally checked and certified.

After contacting Barratt Homes about the latest claim, Nick Fenton, managing director of Barratt Kent, said: "Since October 2008 we have been implementing a comprehensive programme of works on the flues at Riverside Plaza to ensure they are installed to manufacturers' instructions and are as risk-free as possible.

"We have completed checks at 143 of the 153 properties and the programme will be concluded later this year. We apologise to residents for any inconvenience caused in the meantime."

The concerned resident said: "It's been one thing after another since we moved in. First we had the worry of carbon monoxide poisoning, now we're told they're going to have to come in every day to carry out even more work on the boiler.

"It's ridiculous that these properties were allowed to go on sale when there is clearly some sort of problem.

"It seems firms are more concerned about finishing jobs quickly rather than properly. It's not acceptable."

yourmaidstone NEWS IN BRIEF

Fast food trio sought after street stabbing

DETECTIVES are appealing for information about three fast food fans after a 20-year-old man was stabbed during a night out in Maidstone town centre.

The victim was taken to St Thomas' Hospital, south London, after he was stabbed during an incident at the junction of St Faith's Street and Station Road on Saturday April 11, at about 11.30pm. He is expected to make a full recovery.

Det Con Wayne Henneker said: "All three are believed to live in the Maidstone area and regularly attend KFC and McDonald's in Week Street."

Call 01795 419161 if you can help.

NHS superbug appeal after pay-off ruling

A FORMER chief executive at the centre of a hospital superbug scandal is seeking leave to appeal against a High Court ruling which blocked her £250,000 pay-off.

Rose Gibb was at the helm of Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust when two outbreaks of Clostridium difficile resulted in the deaths of at least 90 patients.

She sued for breach of contract after being refused the full pay-off, but Mr Justice Treacy dismissed her claims at the High Court and refused the right to appeal. Ms Gibb has now sought leave to appeal the decision after taking legal advice.

Grave concern over cemetery tributes

MOURNERS at Paddock Wood cemetery have been asked to keep their tributes to loved ones off the grass.

Grieving families who have left items such as pot plants, toy windmills and small figures next to headstones have been told they have three weeks to remove them.

Otherwise the items will be taken away by council staff.

Paddock Wood Town Council says tributes can be placed on headstones but not on the lawn because it makes maintenance difficult.

Kent
Highway
Services



For information and advice on travelling in Kent and for all our traffic regulation orders, please see the Kent on Saturday or the Kent on Sunday or visit our website at www.kent.gov.uk/highways

Anniversary competition climaxes today as artists face judging panel



IN THE FRAME: The panel will look at works submitted by (from left) Benjamin Humphrey, Barry Charlton, Rebecca Crosbie, Kay Gretton and Jacqueline Marie Stevens (below right) before announcing the StARTle 2009 winner

Five-star showing by StARTle contenders

FIVE artists have been chosen to go through to the final of the StARTle 2009 competition – which will be decided today.

Maidstone council, supported by Yourmaidstone, launched the search for the best up-and-coming artists in the borough to mark the first anniversary of the Hazlitt Arts Centre.

One artist who has not exhibited before will win a free four-week exhibition at the Graham Clarke gallery inside the Earl Street arts centre, which could be the break they need to launch their career.

After receiving 34 entries by last Wednesday's deadline, the judging panel, led by renowned Maidstone artist Graham Clarke, met on Friday to select a shortlist of five possible winners.

Mr Clarke was joined on the panel by the acting editor of Yourmaidstone Jon Coates,

■ BY ANNA WHITE

Maidstone council's marketing manager Vronni Ward and Laurence Wood, the head of the University of the Creative Arts in Canterbury.

They chose Jacqueline Marie Stevens, Benjamin Humphrey, Rebecca Crosbie, Barry Charlton and Kay Gretton as the five finalists.

All five have been asked to present more of their work to the judges today (Wednesday) before the winner is chosen.

Mr Clarke said: "I was very pleased with the number of entrants – 300 would have been too many but 34 entries is perfect.

"The quality of work was very good and there are some interesting pieces. All the judges were great and we all agreed on the shortlist.

"We devised a democratic system, which worked very well.

"I'm looking forward to meeting

the artists and seeing what other work they have to offer."

The winner of StARTle 2009 will be announced at 7.30pm during the Hazlitt's anniversary party on Saturday, May 30.

The event includes free activities during the day and an evening performance by top British comedian Mark Steel in the Exchange Studio to round off the celebrations.

Mr Steel has performed as a stand-up on the British comedy circuit and national tours since 1983 and will be on stage at the Hazlitt Theatre from 8pm.

As the competition's media partner Yourmaidstone had two pairs of tickets to give away for the comedy night.

Entrants had to answer the question: Which Maidstone street was TV artist the late Tony Hart born in?

The winners, who gave the correct answer of Hastings Road, are Claire Beale, from Maidstone, and John Barfoot, from Vinters Park.



JUDGING PANEL: Vronni Ward, Graham Clarke, Laurence Wood and Jon Coates

'We're not crooks'

FROM FRONT PAGE

our allowance for just the mortgage or rent for our second homes and petrol.

"Expenses should be used sensibly, which doesn't mean claiming for a wide-screen television.

"But what happens when the boiler blows up in your second home which you only have because you are an MP?"

"For an MP from a modest profession, with an unemployed wife and two children, they're going to have to watch budgets."

The MP also voiced concern about the way the three party leaders, Mr Cameron, Prime Minister Gordon Brown and Lib Dem leader Nick Clegg, have handled the revelations.

Ms Widdicombe, who has been a prominent MP for more than 20 years, said: "All three party leaders have rushed to be the first to come up with a solution, and each one has tried to be tougher than the first, and then the next would be tougher than that."

Bard classic with a very modern theme

FAMILIES will be able to see an outdoor performance of a classic Shakespeare play this summer – with a credit crunch twist.

After the success of last summer's A Midsummer Night's Dream, the Hazlitt Arts Centre and Changeling Theatre are returning with a special performance of The Merchant of Venice.

The performance stars former Hollyoaks actor Oliver Farnworth – who played Will Hackett in the teenage soap – as Lorenzo.

Director Rob Forknall said: "It's set in a city, in a world not that far from our own. This is a credit crunch of Shakespearean proportions."

And in keeping with the credit crunch theme, ticket prices for the show will cost just £10.

Producer Mandy Hare, of the Hazlitt Arts Centre in Maidstone, said: "The Merchant of Venice, one of Shakespeare's most complex plays, has always fascinated us.

"The perennial favourites of cross-dressing and hidden agendas are all there in abundance. But then you have the darker themes of fractured societies, racism, financial collapse – all of which makes it particularly apposite choice for us this year."

Local performances of The Merchant of Venice will take place at the Heritage Millennium Amphitheatre on July 16; Boughton Monchelsea Place on July 24-26 and August 8-9; and The Friars at Aylesford on August 7.

To book, call 01622 758611 or visit www.hazlittartscentre.co.uk.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Brief footbridge closure for maintenance checks

PEOPLE are being advised that a walkway bridge in Maidstone will be closed for a short time tomorrow (Thursday) for maintenance checks.

Lockmeadow Bridge, which is behind David Lloyds fitness club and the Odeon cinema, will be closed for about an hour in the late morning.

A council official said the land-side ramp will be closed for most of the morning but there will be staff on-site to assist people with the stairs when the bridge is open.

Free hearing aid clinic at Methodist church hall

ANYONE with a NHS hearing aid can drop in to one of Hi Kent's free clinics to get it cleaned, retubed and collect fresh batteries.

The charity is running another of its free aftercare clinics for hearing aid users in Headcorn on Tuesday next week.

People can visit the clinic in the Methodist hall, behind the church, between 10am and 11am on May 26.

Advice can also be offered on hearing loss and the services available.

Man beaten and robbed

POLICE are appealing for information after a man was beaten and robbed in an early-morning attack.

The 48-year-old victim was approached by two men near the Honda shop on Loose Road, Maidstone, between 12.30am and 12.40am, on Friday, April 24.

One of the men punched the victim in the face and took his rucksack, which contained a flask and keys. The attacker was white, about 30, 6ft tall, with brown, gelled hair.

He had a foreign accent and was wearing a dark zip-up jumper. Call Crimestoppers on 0800 555111 if you can help.

Bluebell walkers thanked

HOSPICE bosses have thanked hundreds of walkers for helping to raise more than £40,000 at an annual fundraiser.

The Bluebell Walk, in aid of the Heart of Kent Hospice, attracted 1,500 walkers of all ages on an eight-mile circular walk through countryside near Harrietsham on May 3.

The Aylesford-based hospice has thanked all the walkers and to staff at Tesco in Grove Green who provided a ploughman's lunch for each walker.

Mote Park's first Race for Life shrugs off the showers



RAINING CHAMPIONS: Race for Life participants defied the blustery showers to raise cash for Cancer Research UK



START THEM YOUNG: All ages took part

Ladies: on your marks, get wet ... go!

■ BY ANNA WHITE

THOUSANDS of women donned pink outfits to brave heavy showers and blustery winds on Sunday to take part in this year's first Race for Life in Mote Park.

The 5k event set off at 11am in torrential rain, but the runners and walkers were met with welcome sunshine towards the finish.

Despite the damp weather 4,000 women of all ages ran, jogged or walked the route through the Maidstone park to raise funds for Cancer Research UK.

Among those taking part were the Thompson family: 22-year-old Katie, her mother Diane, sister Vicky, 21, and her grandmother Betty Morris, all from Maidstone.

They take part in the Maidstone Race for Life each year in memory of Diane's first-born daughter, Sally, who died from a rare form of cancer of the kidneys just days before her fourth birthday in 1986.

This year had an extra importance as it marked five years since 78-year-old Betty was given the all-clear from breast cancer and she is now out of remission.

When the family crossed the finish line they released pink balloons in memory of Sally and to mark Betty's recovery.

Katie said: "It went really well, we got absolutely soaked but it was definitely worth it. My nan did really well and we all let our balloons go at the end, which was really nice."

Cancer Research UK manager Natasha Eitenne said: "The Maidstone Race for Life saw 4,000 ladies take part in a fantastic event."

"I was so pleased to see so many arrive even though we had very unpredictable weather. But the weather did not deter the amazing women who took part. I'm so proud."

Sunday's run was the first of two Race for Life events in Mote Park this year. The second



IN THE PINK: Race for Life friends hang on to their hats

is on June 7. Already 4,000 women have signed up and filled all the places for the June race, including a team from KOS Media, publishers of this newspaper.

The KOS Media team, which includes staff from editorial, sales and admin is Erica Jones, Jo Nicoll, Lucy Williams, Anna White, Clare Bairam and Sally Ingram. You can sponsor our team at www.raceforlife.org/kosmedia or visit www.raceforlife.org to find out more. The second Maidstone Race for Life will be followed by others across the county, including Tunbridge Wells, Gillingham, Herne Bay, Canterbury, Folkestone and Margate.

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GOING FOR GOLD: Cllr Brian Moss joins Maidstone's Olympic hopefuls for the launch of the sponsorship website

Help us to bring home medals at London 2012

OLYMPIC hopefuls and businesses came together to launch a website dedicated to bringing home gold at London 2012.

The sponsorship site, www.maidstonesdream.co.uk – Bring a Medal Home, is funded by Maidstone council and supported by Yourmaidstone.

It went live at a ceremony at Maidstone Gateway in King Street on Tuesday evening.

The website features Maidstone's top athletes, including their sport, name, age, photos, education background, sporting history, aspirations, coach, and achievements.

Businesses can search through the profiles and choose who they would like to sponsor.

Maidstone council's cabinet member for leisure and culture, Brian Moss, appealed to business representatives at the event.

He said: "Every business in Maidstone can be involved and can afford £20 or £30 a month to help these athletes pay for their travel, food, accommodation or phone."

"Just by giving these athletes their support businesses are showing they care."

Ed Hamilton, a 22-year-old 400m hurdler from Linton, who has been dreaming of making it to the London 2012 Olympics for the last three years, appealed to the businesses on behalf of all of the athletes.

■ BY ANNA WHITE

He said: "We are not just looking for cash but also help in kind. My uncle is a butcher and he helps me by giving me free steaks."

"I spend about £2,500 per year on things such as travelling, and the bank of mum and dad can only stretch so far."

"But it is not only what you can do for us. We can make appearances at your events, hold coaching classes and make some great opportunities."

Paralympian hopeful Ian Payne, 12, who has specialised in wheelchair tennis for eight years, said: "It has always been my dream to go to the Olympics and the fact they will be in London has just pushed me even harder."

His parents Glynis and Robert Payne, from East Farleigh, said they are "extremely proud" of their son and spent the evening mingling with businesses hoping to set up some sponsorship links.

Frances Sweeting, from Maidstone-based Horwath Clark Whitehill accountancy firm, said: "This is a great initiative for businesses to encourage these individuals."

Yourmaidstone will profile one of the site's athletes every month from next Wednesday.

Anyone wishing to register their interest should call Karen Jeal on 01622 602759 or email maidstonesdream@maidstone.gov.uk.

yourmaidstone

NEWS IN BRIEF

Police bravery rewarded

A HIGH-ranking officer has been honoured for his bravery in arresting a murderer.

Chief Superintendent Alasdair Hope, now area commander for Mid Kent Police, was on his way home one night in September 2006, when he heard about a fatal stabbing in Park Wood on his police radio.

He drove to the area, saw a man matching the suspect's description near a block of flats, spoke to him and walked with him.

Ch Supt Hope persuaded the man to go to a well-lit road, told him he was a police officer and arrested him on suspicion of murder.

The suspect was convicted of murder and sentenced to life in prison at Maidstone Crown Court on June 12, 2007.

The area commander's actions were praised at the Chief Constable's Awards held at Kent Police College in Maidstone last Wednesday. Seven other officers from the Mid Kent area were also honoured.

Farmers' market booming

WEST Malling Farmers Market has flourished since being saved from closure.

Yourmaidstone reported last month that the monthly market was in danger of closing when its funding was pulled.

But Cllr Trudy Dean, leader of the Liberal Democrat group on KCC, used her contacts to secure funding with help from Steve Woods, of Meopham Farmers Market, and Produced in Kent, and the April market was described by stallholders as the best yet.

The next market is in the High Street from 10am to 2pm this Sunday.

Cooking on the frontline

A WARTIME oven will be cooking foods that would have been eaten by Crimean War soldiers at an event this summer.

The Soyer Stove, which was invented by Alexis Soyer, will be at the War and Peace Show, at The Hop Farm in Paddock Wood, from July 22 to 26.

The oven, which is credited with saving more lives than Florence Nightingale, will be part of a display of field catering, staged by a team from the Royal Logistic Museum.

For more information on the event, go to www.thehopfarm.co.uk or www.thewarandpeaceshow.com.

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Arson suspects on CCTV

DETECTIVES have released CCTV images of two boys they want to speak to in connection with an arson attack at a school.

The blaze started when portable buildings were set alight at New Line Learning Academy in Boughton Lane, Loose, between 9-9.20pm on Monday, February 27.

The fire caused damage estimated at £250,000 and three fire crews were called to the scene.

Officers are hoping the

individuals in the images, who seem to be in their teens, may be able to help with the investigation.

One wore a light-coloured hoodie, light shoes, and dark trousers. The other wore light trousers and a dark, long-sleeved top with a small logo on the left-hand side.

Detective Constable Clive Fowler said: "I would urge anyone with information to call Maidstone police on 01622 690055 or Crime stoppers on 0800 555111."



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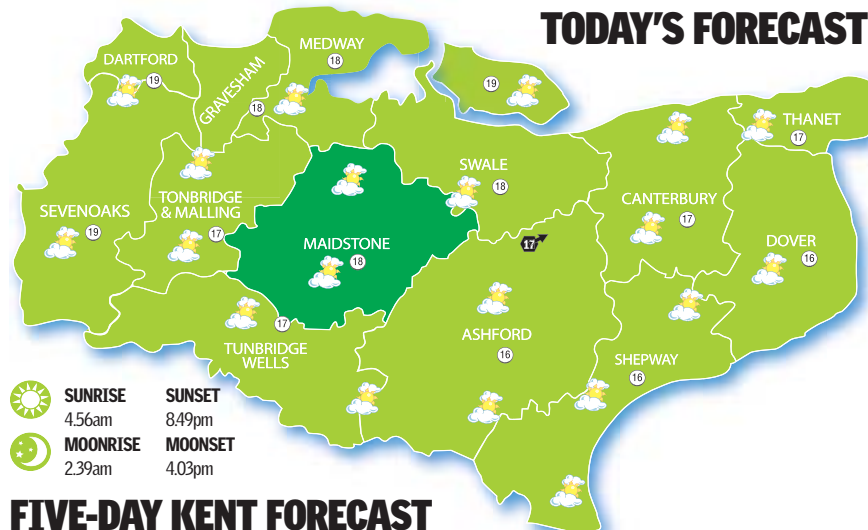
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FIVE-DAY KENT FORECAST

	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon		Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon
Ashford	16°C	19°C	19°C	16°C	18°C	Gravesend	17°C	19°C	19°C	17°C	19°C
Canterbury	16°C	18°C	18°C	16°C	18°C	Maidstone	16°C	18°C	19°C	17°C	18°C
Chatham	16°C	18°C	17°C	15°C	16°C	Ramsgate	16°C	18°C	18°C	16°C	18°C
Dartford	17°C	19°C	19°C	17°C	19°C	Rochester	16°C	18°C	17°C	15°C	16°C
Dover	15°C	16°C	16°C	15°C	16°C	Sevenoaks	15°C	17°C	17°C	16°C	16°C
Faversham	16°C	18°C	17°C	15°C	16°C	Sittingbourne	16°C	18°C	17°C	15°C	16°C
Folkestone	15°C	16°C	16°C	15°C	16°C	Tonbridge	15°C	18°C	19°C	17°C	18°C
Gillingham	16°C	18°C	17°C	15°C	16°C	Tun Wells	15°C	18°C	19°C	17°C	18°C



WEEKEND HIGH TIDES

Chatham	Saturday	12:38pm	5.8m
	Sunday	1:22pm	6.0m
Dover	Saturday	10:38am	6.3m
	Sunday	11:23am	6.5m
Dungeness	Saturday	10:57am	7.2m
	Sunday	11:39am	7.5m
Ramsgate	Saturday	11:08am	4.8m
	Sunday	11:53am	4.9m
Sheerness	Saturday	12:27pm	5.6m
	Sunday	1:12pm	5.7m
Whitstable	Saturday	12:27pm	5.0m
	Sunday	1:13pm	5.1m



AROUND THE WORLD YESTERDAY

Amsterdam	16°C	Madrid	23°C
Athens	27°C	New York	13°C
Barcelona	20°C	Paris	17°C
Beijing	34°C	Rome	24°C
Bombay	33°C	Sydney	20°C
Cape Town	17°C	Tenerife	23°C
Cardiff	12°C	Tokyo	27°C
Gibraltar	23°C	Vancouver	21°C
Hong Kong	33°C	Warsaw	21°C
Las Palmas	23°C	Wellington	12°C



FUND-RAISERS: Fans presented a cheque for cancer charity

Charity scores through dedication of supporters

FOOTBALL fans from Maidstone raised nearly £10,000 of a £23,000 donation given to Arsenal's Charity of the Season.

Members of the worldwide Arsenal Supporters Club combined fundraising efforts to present the Teenage Cancer Trust with the cheque before their clash with Chelsea at the Emirates Stadium on Sunday May 10.

The contribution was the biggest of all – raising £9,700 of the impressive fund by hosting various fundraisers.

Tom Smethers, from Maidstone, was pitch-side at the Chelsea game to help present the cheque to the charity, which helps improve the lives of teenagers living with cancer.

He said: "Each year Arsenal selects a new charity of the season, so it's important for us to keep coming up with new ideas and support the club in other ways than just on the pitch."

"We're delighted by the amount of money raised this year, not just by our own supporters club, but everyone's – I think Arsenal will manage to top the £300,000 target which is testament to everyone's enthusiasm and support for this fantastic cause."

The donation will be put towards Arsenal's goal of raising £300,000 for an education zone at the charity's new day care centre which is due to be opened in London in 2012.

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yourlocalinterview

QUESTION & ANSWER

DUNCAN GALLOWAY



Q Tell us a little about yourself

A I am the lead singer and band leader of the Pasadena Roof Orchestra, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year.

Q How did you first become involved in the Pasadena Roof Orchestra?

A I first heard of the orchestra in the 1980s and had always admired the music of the dance-band era. I first came across it on Dennis Potter's TV series Pennies From Heaven.

Q What is it like to be in a modern swing and dance orchestra?

A I suspect the rigours of being on the road on tour in the 1920s and 30s is not much different from today. Instead of a tour bus, we tend to fly quite a lot these days, which is an experience I don't enjoy.

The reward for all that time spent in queues for security, queues for coffee, queues for boarding, is seeing so many different places. I would hate, however, to have a milometer fitted on me – I fear it would be over the million mark by now.

Q What would you say has been your most memorable or exciting experience so far?

A One of my most memorable experiences is sailing into Sydney harbour on the P&O

cruise-liner Oriana's maiden world voyage. It is a naturally beautiful bay, and the opera house is a modern wonder of the world.

Working with the Pasadena Roof Orchestra has become almost a life passion for me. In my time with the band I have met some extraordinary musicians and some extraordinary characters.

Music, especially jazz music, is a lot about listening to what the others are doing around you. It is probably as important, if not more so, than what you do yourself.

During my time with the band, I have had the benefit of listening to some great players. In this respect I have been very privileged.

Q How did you become involved in showbusiness?

A I trained as an actor at the Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art. I have had some great experiences in the thespian world, including visiting the Taj Mahal and being a founder member of the Stadium Theatre Company when P&O Cruises put a repertory company to sea. My first world cruise was on a lovely ship, SS Canberra.

I was always keen on singing and play saxophone and clarinet myself, so the progression from actor to musician was quite logical. I have performed in a few musicals, including Guys and Dolls, and Les Miserables. I sometimes get the urge to do a serious dramatic role again, but it soon passes!

Q Have you been to Folkestone before and what do you know of the area?

A The Pasadena Roof Orchestra have played at Folkestone before, including most recently in March. More information about the orchestra can be found at the website www.pasadena.co.uk. It has a brief history of the band, a picture gallery, tour dates and other essential information.

Q What do you like to do in your spare time when you're not working?

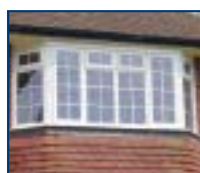
A When I am not queuing up at an airport I am a keen golfer and happy attempting to lower my handicap at my club near Cambridge. I also spend a fair bit of time helping my wife's business which we jointly own, called The Cambridge Sushi Company. We supply really good-quality sushi to the colleges, canteens and offices in and around the city. The proof of this is the fact that I still enjoy eating it after sometimes seeing so much of it. You can find out more at www.cambridge-sushi.com.

Q Tell us something that people don't tend to know about you

A I used to play cricket to a fairly good level. I was once a wicketkeeper/batsman and my claim to fame was getting Mark Ramprakash out twice in one delivery. I stumped him down the leg side and he also got an edge. I asked the umpire at the bowler's end if he heard it and he said he didn't, but I know the truth!

The lead singer of the Pasadena Roof Orchestra, who entertained so hugely at Folkestone's Leas Cliff Hall, spoke to **James Alexandre** about being on tour, delivering sushi and bowling out an England cricketer

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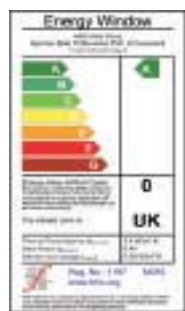
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Why a sinking barge was run aground in the Channel. Search 'barge'.



School takes part in a world skipping record attempt. Search 'skipping'.

EDITOR'S CHOICE

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Fired Mona admits gay was wrong for Margate

■ BY STEVE KNIGHT

FORMER beauty queen Mona Lewis says she should have trusted her knowledge of Kent to avoid being booted off The Apprentice.

The 28-year-old from Sittingbourne was the latest candidate to be told "You're fired" by Sir Alan Sugar on the popular BBC One show



NOT IMPRESSED: Sir Alan Sugar

last Wednesday night, after her team failed in its attempts to re-brand Margate.

Mona said she felt her team made the wrong decision in attempting to promote the gritty seaside town as a haven for gay people, and she

wishes she had fought harder against the idea: "Being a resident of Kent and knowing more about it than the others, I thought it would be better to target the family market because Margate has a lot of family heritage, it's receiving a lot of investment and there are major things going on.

"I wish I had fought harder against the gay idea because I thought it limited the market. You can be gay and still be part of a family."

Despite Mona's opposition to her team's idea, Sir Alan revealed on the show how the branding experts and residents who acted as judges for the task were supportive of it.

What they were less impressed with was the shoddily-produced leaflet and cluttered series of posters that accompanied the campaign.

Mona was fired from the show after being brought back into the boardroom with project manager Debra Barr and former commercial manager James McQuillan.

She said: "I was fired because Sir Alan felt I wasn't fully backing up the team and also because he could not see where he could fit me into his operation.

"I think the time was right for me to leave

because I really missed my little boy and eight weeks was a long time to be away from him, so I was happy in that respect."

Mona, who was born in Karachi, Pakistan, and is a former financial manager, now works for Business Link to help Kent firms capitalise on the 2012 Olympics.

She said that "only time will tell" if her time on The Apprentice would help or hinder her job prospects but that she was pleased with the way she came across on the show.

Experience

Mona said: "It was definitely an experience to be on The Apprentice and it was quite an honour to be selected, especially as I have only lived in the country for four years.

"I never claimed to be good at creating or designing things, but I'm so pleased I was able to show off my selling and negotiating skills and I think I acted with dignity and professionalism at all times."

National accounts manager Lorraine Tighe is now Kent's only representative left.

The next episode of The Apprentice can be seen at 9pm tonight on BBC One.



GAY RESORT? Apprentice Mona (inset) admits she should have promoted Margate to families



DRY SPELL: Weather experts predict a hot summer

Summer thirsty work for wildlife

Pat Crawford gives wildlife gardening advice from Hadlow College in her exclusive column for Yourmaidstone

THE majority of weather forecasters say we're in for a barbeque summer this year.

If they are right it will be good for dining al fresco in the evenings but not quite so good for wildlife and gardens because natural sources of water can soon dry up.

Hopefully your water butts and tanks were filled when rain was plentiful.

This will – deservedly – bring benefits if a long, hot summer results in the water companies imposing hosepipe bans.

We only need a few consecutive dry days for water to become a problem for wildlife – especially in more built-up areas.

Shallow birdbaths and other containers dry out quickly when the sun is hot and so now is a good time both to review existing watering places and add a few extra ones.

Parent birds are busy at this time of the year feeding their young. They work long days and will still be seeking food for their offspring well into the evening.

Why not swap watching a wildlife programme on the television for the real thing? Sitting quietly – surrounded by the scents of the garden – a glass of chilled wine near at hand, has got to be the better option.

At this time of the year birds can be relied upon to collect insects to feed to their young.

This applies to seed-eating species as well as the insect-eaters as their first-choice food can be in short supply at this time of the year.

• Hadlow College offers a wide range of RHS, City and Guilds, and other horticulture courses. Call 0500 551434 for more details.

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Pick your own fruits and salads, beets and treats

FROM succulent strawberries to beetroot and asparagus, the Garden of England is set to reap plenty of rewards this summer for the pick-your-own season.

With a predicted spell of warm weather, there is renewed optimism from Kent growers who are anticipating strong crops and interest from a younger generation of customers.

Amid a wealth of TV gardening programmes and shows promoting healthier lifestyles, a greater number of people are embracing the five-a-day recommended dose of fruit and vegetables.

It all ties in perfectly with our 2009 campaign urging our readers to help protect the local economy by buying locally produced and supplied food and drink – spearheaded by our website www.foodforkent.co.uk, which unites the best producers under one online roof.

As a perennial favourite, demand for Kentish strawberries is particularly high. Martin Clews, of Stonepitts farm at Seal Chart, near Sevenoaks, is expecting a strong response to the company's latest crop available next month.

"Things are looking pretty good for this year. We took over the business 17 years ago and it's coming up to the 50th anniversary of the company now," he said. He added that despite a poor summer last year, the firm's long-established reputation had ensured its survival.

Despite its success with several strawberry varieties, Mr Clews explained the pick-your-own business has in recent years been suffering a decline since its peak in the



1980s. He believed this was largely due to a combination of poor summer weather and supermarket competition producing fruit all-year round.

"It's a shame we are the only people producing pick-your-own strawberries in this area, there used to be three or four others in this part of Kent when we first started out. We have had to move with the times and really ask people what strawberries they prefer, with the Old Cambridge being a real favourite – it goes back to the 60s and has a real old Englishness about it.

"This year we got in touch with more than 50 schools and my wife Jackie gave a lecture about how strawberries grow, and seeing the farm is a good way for them to learn."

Susie Mills, of Valley Arch pick-your-own

near Dartford was also enthused by the prospects for the new season. She explained they were anticipating a strong demand for its strawberry-growing run: "We are finding a lot of younger people are coming to do pick-your own these days, which is a good thing as it used to be mainly a more mature market. It's a nice thing for a family to do and there's nothing like having some local strawberries in the summer.

"As with all the produce we grow, it's much better than fruit and veg that has been frozen, where you lose a lot of the vitamins in the process."

Farm shops in the county have also reported significant interest in a wide range of locally grown summer crops.

Paula Everett of Macknade farm shop in Faversham said summer fruit and veg had been proving extremely popular. Sales of asparagus and strawberries (maturing early due to being grown in poly-tunnels) were also doing well.

The Kent firm's enthusiasm was also shared by the National Farmers' Retail & Markets Association (FARMA). It expected the UK to follow the American pick-your-own trend in being on course for a strong resurgence as customers find it an excellent way to get quality produce at the best prices.

"The time seems to be right for pick-your-own, reflecting the fact that people are prepared to 'do-it-themselves' to get quality and value," said Gareth Jones from FARMA.

He added: "Great value for money is just one of the advantages. The only other way to get such fresh and flavoursome produce is to grow it yourself."



A pedal-powered delivery

RECOGNISING how quickly the new season's asparagus is flying off the shelves, the manager of one hotel decided this week to go the extra mile to meet demand.

On Tuesday, David Sharma of Chartham Hatch's Howfield Manor Hotel, ensured next to no carbon footprint for the hotel's asparagus supplies.

Mr Sharma collected the asparagus grown in nearby Blean from the Goods Shed market in Canterbury before taking it back to Howfield Manor Hotel to be used in the restaurant, and he took the journey under pedal power on a bicycle.

It came about after Mr Sharma, who cycles to Howfield from Canterbury, found out the local supplier Charles Atkins delivers to the Goods Shed, but would be unable to deliver to the hotel. Keen to keep food miles down, and to avoid another delivery journey, Mr Sharma decided to pick up his order of asparagus every week of the season by bike.

Howfield Manor Hotel has recently submitted an application to join Produced in Kent – the organisation set up to promote local producers and suppliers – to demonstrate its commitment to using local produce and supporting its producers.

• For the latest offers of local asparagus see www.foodforkent.co.uk.

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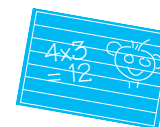
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BREAK TIME

French students switched on by visit

FRENCH exchange students and teachers were impressed by the high standards at MidKent College when they visited last month.

The foreign students, all aged between 16 and 18, took part in electronic engineering courses at the college's Oakwood Park campus in Maidstone to find out how French wiring systems differ from those used in England.

During their visit, the group from Lycee Alfred Kastler School in Denain, northern France, also accompanied college tutors to Littlebrook Power Station in Dartford, where they took part in practical and theory-based lessons.

Teacher Madame Ahmed said: "The workshops here are totally different to those we have in our school in France – they are much better equipped, worlds apart in fact."

Student Julien Bessirard, 17, added: "I really like MidKent College."

The equipment here is much bigger and of a much higher standard than I am used to."

Global get-together put future issues on the table

STUDENTS from across Europe came to Maidstone for a two-day conference to debate global issues.

The schoolchildren from Germany, France and Finland, joined pupils from secondary schools in Maidstone at the International Student Conference on May 6 and 7.

During the event, which was held at Cornwallis Academy in Linton, the students discussed ideas, made videos and devised a schedule for activities based on global topics.

The topics covered included global future, community and school future, and the future for individual students.

The groups worked together at the academy's new plaza, which opened at Easter, offering state-of-the-art facilities and technology.

On the final day of the conference the students had the opportunity to showcase their work during a presentation to headteachers, delegates and Kent County Council representatives.

Assistant principal Chloe Thompson, who

■ BY ANNA WHITE

ran the event, said: "The International Conference was a fantastic opportunity for pupils from different cultures to get together to discuss their different points of view about the future and how it will impact on them."

"Students were extremely positive and engaged throughout the two days and are looking forward to future events where they can discuss their ideas further."

"The success of this conference has enabled us to make this an annual event to hopefully be held in different countries."

Headteacher David Simons said: "This event was a fantastic opportunity for our students to meet other young people, experience different cultures and talk about education."

"The discussions were both animated and productive, and we plan to make this an annual event where our students will be involved in future return visits."

The schools which took part in the confer-



TABLE TALK: Students have discussion during conference

ence included Maidstone Grammar School, Maidstone Grammar School for Girls, Maplesden Noakes, St Simon Stock, Astor of Hever, Invicta Grammar School and both New Line Learning Academies.

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We all complain about the weather but no-one does anything about it

"ANYONE else, any other profession, if they were as incompetent, they'd be fired."

A frequent tirade, and applied almost invariably to those who forecast our weather.

I heard it just last week from a warden at a nature reserve, a man more familiar than most with the climate of these islands.

"They've forecast rain for every day this week and what did we get? Half an hour last night. The forecasts aren't worth bothering with. They should just give us the charts and let us make up our own minds," he said.

But of course 'they' don't. 'They' (the BBC, in this instance) have for the most part taken them away. We are, it appears, too stupid to be granted access to something as bewildering as a meteorological chart.

In truth, weather maps are no great puzzle, but in Dumb Britain it's best we're kept away from anything remotely challenging. In a way there's a logic to it. If the BBC's own forecast-

ers can't interpret a weather map, why should the layman? But it's a policy that is strangely flawed.

At the end of the forecast, those of us geeky enough to want more details are urged to visit the website. And here something odd has happened.

The website has had a makeover. But, in contrast to the TV, there hasn't been a dumbing down. Rather, the website has been rendered practically unusable.

It's near-impossible to find anything you want, links work on some computers but not others, while a bid to navigate the site is likely to leave you stranded in cyberspace.

Exasperated, you wind up back at the telly, where, if nothing else, the lovely Nazaneen Ghaffar makes the whole charade bearable.

Sadly, however, even she seems to have been got at behind the scenes. After a promising start her style has changed, presumably under orders.

You can imagine the pep talk: "Now,

Nazaneen, never forget you're talking to morons. All they want to know is whether it's a day in the garden or on the sunbed. Leap about like a jester. Put on an inane grin if the sun's coming out and pout if it's not."

But this is serious stuff. How many lives have been lost as a result of poor weather forecasting? Michael Fish, in a BBC news item in which he denies any role in the infamous 1987 hurricane-strength storm and lumps the blame on Bill Giles, finds a silver lining to that particular cloud.

"Craftily, I am trying to promote a book on the subject [extreme weather]..." he tells us.

What spiffing fun. Yet 18 people died in that storm. How many might still be with us if they'd been given the right facts? Perhaps we shouldn't ask. After all, what do we know?

EDITOR'S NOTE: All blogs are supplied with full name and address of the authors. They do not reflect the view of the newspaper but are designed to give our readers the chance to air their views.

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If there is a story in your area you think we should be covering contact the acting editor, **Jon Coates**, on 01303 817048 or email him on the details above. If you want to be the next Maidstone blogger then all you have to do is submit an article to us (of around 550 words) and email it to the editor. And don't forget, for all the latest news and video from your town log-on to www.yourmaidstone.co.uk.

Write to The Editor, Yourmaidstone, KOS Media, Apple Barn, Hythe Road, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6SR.

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WIN adventures on your computer with Wallace and Gromit



"BRILLIANT, lad!" Wallace and Gromit, beloved stars of Aardman Animations' award-winning films, are now appearing in a new series of stories you can play developed by interactive entertainment pioneers Telltale Games.



Entertainment pioneers Telltale Games have developed four all-new Wallace and Gromit stories released as monthly downloads for your Xbox 360 or PC.

The Wallace and Gromit Grand Adventures interactive game shows the two characters coming up with new business ventures and contraptions which fans can be a part of via their computer.

The game features imaginative storylines, humorous scripts and allows you to control the characters in each episode and be a part of the creative

world of West Wallaby Street.

We are offering 12 lucky winners a chance to win an entire series of the Wallace and Gromit Grand Adventures on the PC (priced at £25 each season) which each include four exciting episodes, once the winners have been picked we will send Gift Codes by email so winners can download the game.

To enter, simply answer the question below and send your entry on a postcard along with your e-mail address (if applicable), name, address, and daytime telephone number to Wallace & Gromit Competition, KOS Media, Apple Barn, Smeeth, Ashford, TN25 6SR. Closing date is May 31, 2009.

Question: Who are the Entertainment Pioneers behind the new Wallace and Gromit adventure games?

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If you do not wish to receive any literature please write 'no literature' on your entry.



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TALK TIME

KATE PATERSON

Manager of the new Rush salon in Maidstone talks about why Fremlin Walk was the best location for their outlet to move into



How did you get into hairdressing?

Working in the hair industry was always what I wanted to do. I trained in a salon near my home and then moved to London once I completed my qualification. I haven't looked back since.

Is being a salon manager always something you wanted to achieve?

Yes and no. It's a brilliant opportunity for me and after having taught hairdressing for six years it's great to have a new challenge. So far I'm really enjoying it, even though it's been non-stop since the opening.

Tell us about the Rush salons?

British Hairdressing Award winners, Rush, now have 37 salons across London and the South East and Rush Maidstone, in Fremlin Walk, is the latest addition to the group, offering a range of expert cuts, colours and treatments, as well as salon professional products. So whether you're after a classic cut or creative colour, a Rush Stylist will be there to guide you through.

Why did Rush choose Maidstone as a new location?

Fremlin Walk in particular is a great location for Rush. With salons in Tunbridge Wells, Canterbury and Bromley across Kent, Rush is able to make creative and cutting edge hairdressing accessible to all with a salon near you. We're open until 8pm weeknights so that you can pop in after work and 10am to 5pm on Sundays too.

YOUR LETTERS



We should progress or fade away

I have come to the conclusion that this nation of ours, and definitely Kent, has only themselves to blame if we fade away.

Why do I say this? Because it seems we do not want progress.

I am alluding to the proposed Kent International Gateway freight depot near Bearsted.

This is a thing that should be far bigger than the opinions of a few villagers.

Also I notice the age of some of those against the proposed freight station is 79.

Well, I am 71 and will be 72 at the end of this year, and I am all for such a development, it's no use trying to keep fields at the expense of progress.

When I was young and lived at Aldon Farm in Offham it was an area covered with orchards and now it isn't, also where these houses are, used to be farmland



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and woods.

The only objection I have is the fact that houses have been built with little thought of work or of young people.

If the powers to be were to ask my opinion, I would be all for a

freight station.

Don't forget over the past few years several firms have vanished, for instance Reed International, Halls Brickworks, and Travis Perkins to name a few.

As yet these places have not been replaced so not only does it need the freight station it also needs several other places to open.

It is the young ones coming along that we have to think about, not the opinions of people who do not like change.

Also just look at Japan, that country was destroyed during the war but look at it now. That's one country our country could take lessons from.

Mrs K L Wood, from Larkfield, by letter



There are cameras already on the M20

Your article in last week's paper states that new cameras will be created along the M20 for the proposed variable speed limit.

As someone who regularly travels along that section of motorway I can confirm that there are many dormant cameras along that stretch and they have been there for over a year now.

It would appear that the proposal is clearly going to go ahead whatever the consultation's outcome.

Ian Parish, by email

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Scrap Dartford tolls and let people breathe easy



Scrap toll fees in polluted agreement

I write after reading the story in Yourmaidstone on May 6 about calls to suspend the Dartford tolls to see if this reduces air pollution.

It seems very strange that in London there is a charge to stop congestion and pollution but a few miles down the road, at the Dartford Tunnel, there is a charge that causes congestion and pollution.

A Department of Transport spokesman said that without the toll traffic levels would be even higher, leading to more congestion and seriously worsening pollution. What a load of rubbish.

By getting rid of the toll charge traffic would flow quicker reducing congestion and pollution.

If another crossing is built it will also be a toll crossing causing yet more congestion and pollution in another area.

It is about time the Government honoured the agreement and scrapped the unfair toll charge.

Peter Nassan, by letter

Free factsheet will shed light on dyslexia

This week has been designated as Xtraordinary Week. The aim is to raise awareness, and focus on the strengths and talents, of dyslexic children everywhere.

To coincide with the awareness week I have written a free fact sheet on dyslexia, which provides information about the condition.

Children who have dyslexia can have problems with reading, writing or spelling.

It's believed that one in ten children have some form of dyslexia, which is Greek for "difficulty with words".

Parents naturally want the best for their children. They know that good literacy skills are the building blocks to educational success and a satisfying career.

But many parents are in the dark about their child's special educational needs and how best to help them.

That's why I welcome the launch of Xtraordinary Week and have written this fact sheet to help answer some of the many questions which parents may have about dyslexia.

For a free copy of the fact sheet, they can write to me at Dyslexia Awareness Fact Sheet, Appleford School, Shrewton, Nr Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP3 4HL, call 01980 621020, email secretary@appleford-wilts.sch.uk, or visit the website at www.appleford.wilts.sch.uk.

Dr Peter Gardner, educational psychologist, by email

Saddle up for charity bike ride to Paris

I am writing to encourage your readers to make September the month they decide to do something different this year – by taking part in Europe's first charity Folding Bike Challenge from London to Paris.

With 43 per cent of people in Kent believing they are not adventurous enough when embracing new challenges, the Folding Bike challenge is the perfect opportunity to try something different – making 2009 an unforgettable year.

Providing an alternative take on London to Paris cycle rides, the Folding Bike Challenge is supporting the British Heart Foundation (BHF) and the disability charity Scope.

Organised by events company Action Challenge, the challenge will see participants in the saddle for a gruelling 240 miles. Setting off from the capital's London Eye on September 9 and reaching the Eiffel Tower in Paris four days later.

It's guaranteed to be fun and is the perfect excuse to start training and getting into shape for the summer, so what are you waiting for Kent?

For information and to book your place today call 0207 354 1450 or visit www.foldingbikechallenge.com.

Thanks in advance for your help.

Kate Mitchell (BHF) and Jason Suckley (Scope), by email

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HISTORY dating back to the New Stone Age era and a working monastery are two reasons why a growing number of tourists are visiting Aylesford.

The village, which sits on the banks of the River Medway, has grown rapidly during the past 30 years and now boasts about 5,000 residents.

Despite the expansion, Aylesford has adapted well to its larger community and kept its characteristic charm through its village pubs, historic buildings and attractions.

Historians have been able to trace activity in the area back to the New Stone Age, which is documented from 4000BC to 2200BC, and has attracted plenty of visitors to the village.

One example of its extensive history is Aylesford Bridge, which crosses the River Medway and has been traced back to about the 14th century. Historians say it is one of the earliest bridges to be built in this country.

Some of the historic buildings may have been destroyed throughout time but several chamber tombs, including the village's famous Kits Coty House, and The Friars Aylesford Priory - home of the Carmelite order - still stand.

The impressive Friars site, which offers both outdoor and indoor chapels, remains home to Carmelites and still attracts pilgrims.



It is open to the public all year round and hosts a number of events throughout the year, including its popular summer and Christmas fairs.

There are good railway links to London and a number of hotels,

guest houses, restaurants, and bed and breakfasts, to meet the demands of a growing number of tourists.

Aylesford is also the home of The Heart of Kent Hospice, which helps adults and their families cope with life-limiting illnesses.



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On your doorstep - featuring Sutton Valence

THE village of Sutton Valence is at the centre of Maidstone's plans to host Olympic teams in the run-up to London 2012.

Sutton Valence School has already started work on a state-of-the-art athletics track, costing £794,000, in its 100-acre grounds.

The top independent school was nominated as an official Olympic training centre for athletics, badminton, basketball, fencing and archery earlier this year.

But if Olympic competitors come to the picturesque village they might struggle to focus on training, as they will be surrounded by scenic countryside and four traditional pubs.

The village, on the outskirts of Maidstone, sits on top of Sutton Valence Hill and boasts stunning views across the Weald of Kent.

Its hilltop location means the village's layout is staggered down the hill, creating crooked and windy streets which add to its charm and history, which dates back to Roman times.

Although it is quite a small village, Sutton Valence has still found enough room to have four traditional English pubs - all within five minutes walking distance of each other.

The Swan and the Queens Head, in Broad Street, are believed to be the oldest out of the four and date back to the 15th-century, followed by the Kings Head and the Clothworkers Arms.

The four pubs all come together each year on New Year's Day



to take part in the annual Pram Race, which sees teams in fancy dress race down the hill in a home-made kart.

The event is extremely popular with residents and often attracts plenty of visitors.

The senior section of Sutton Valence School is based in the vil-

lage and it has a sister preparatory school in neighbouring village Chart Sutton.

Oscar-winning actress Dame Judi Dench, 74, visited the village 18 months ago to officially open the school's new Baughan Theatre.

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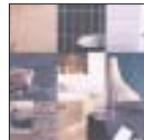
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yourmaidstonemusic

You'll be raving about the dance music at Hop Farm

■ BY SIMON ROBINSON

BELGIAN mixmasters 2ManyDJs have been given top billing on the Hop Farm Festival's dance stage line up.

The cut-and-paste duo – famed for fusing tracks from the likes of the Velvet Underground, Destiny's Child, Dolly Parton and Salt 'n' Pepa into one essential album – will bring the Paddock Wood two-dayer to a close on Sunday, July 5.

Legendary French DJ Etienne De Crecy will perform live on the previous night.

The likes of Paul Weller, Doves, The View, Ash and Editors are set to grace the main stage over the weekend but Hop Farm organisers said anyone able to prise themselves away from the big draws would be in for a treat.

They said: "Headlining on Saturday we have the amazing Etienne De Crecy live, bringing his full-on show in his amazing cube structure.

"It is one of the best shows, if not the best, by a DJ.

"Sunday's headliner we have one of the biggest names in dance music, 2ManyDJs.

"They are going to be one of the highlights of this year's festival, I guarantee it'll be one of the most talked about shows in dance music circles this year.

"Check out the line up for details on the rest of bill... it is one of the best dance line up's this year. If you like your dance music, you won't want to leave this tent."

The Hop Farm Festival stands alone in the overcrowded festival market – offering an event free from ticket registration, VIP areas,



branding and sponsorship.

This year the festival offers a weekend experience of boutique camping, top-notch food and traditional ales, with some of the best artists playing across three stages.

The Hop Farm Festival takes place at The Hop Farm, Paddock Wood, on Saturday, July 4 and Sunday, 5.

Weekend tickets cost £125 with day tickets priced at £65.

For more information on this year's event visit www.hopfarmfestival.com.

Saturday, July 4

- The Fratellis
- Pigeon Detectives
- The View
- Ash
- Echo and the Bunnymen
- Etienne De Crecy
- Florence and the Machine
- Noah and the Whale

Sunday, July 5

- Paul Weller
- Editors
- Doves
- 2ManyDJs
- Super Furry Animals
- The Twang
- Mystery Jets
- Ladyhawke



TOP BILLING: (Top) 2ManyDJs have been given top billing on the dance stage line-up; and (above) legendary French DJ Etienne De Crecy will perform

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Offering men the help they are afraid to ask for

■ Kent Counselling for Men

WHEN it comes to personal matters many men are reluctant to seek the help of a counsellor.

Kent Counselling for Men has been set up to make talking therapies more accessible for men.

John Kennett of Kent Counselling for Men said: "Failed relationships. Distant children. Critical parents. Inappropriate outbursts of anger. Loveless marriages. Addictions to pornography. Flirtations and affairs. Feeling stuck and trapped. Unresolved grief. Bouts of impotency that have no medical explanation..."

"Men are plagued with problems like these but don't always take action to resolve them."

"Men's attitudes to counselling are changing. Traditionally they have not used counselling service. Indeed statistics from the counselling and psychotherapy profession still show that women are twice as likely to seek this sort of help than are men despite the fact that men are just as likely as women to suffer conditions such as depression."

Men's reluctance to seek help is further evidenced by government suicide figures – men are four times as likely to commit suicide as women. Thankfully, this trend is changing and men are increasingly using counselling services.

"It's easy to stereotype men as being unemotional, but this is far from the truth," continued John.



"Men are emotional but often lack the language and skills to know how to express and deal with their emotions. Men tend to believe that they should be able to sort themselves out on their own, that counselling is for people with 'bigger problems', or they simply don't want to admit that there is a problem that needs addressing."

Cost for a first session is just £20 – half the usual rate. "This toe-in-the-water is an opportunity for them to meet me and me to meet them," said John. "Hopefully by the end of this assessment session they know if this is something they want and I will be able to give them a steer as to what to expect."

Kent Counselling for Men, Maidstone Community Support Centre, Marsham Street, Maidstone ME14 1HH www.kentcounsellingformen.co.uk

TOP TIPS

Village Hotel, Maidstone

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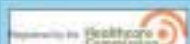
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Stand up for top comedy

Headliner Michael McIntyre's show is a sell-out, but there's still plenty to see at comedy festival

STAND UP!

Friday, May 22 to Monday, May 25
Quarterhouse, Folkestone

GIGGLE your way through the bank holiday with the first Stand Up! Folkestone Comedy Festival.

The headline act of this inaugural comic celebration is Michael McIntyre, a phenomenally popular comedian whose show sold out within hours of tickets going on sale.

The son of a scriptwriter for Kenny Everett, he evidently has funny bones and his rise to fame over the last few years has been stellar. His next tour includes dates at Wembley Arena, so securing this intimate gig at Quarterhouse is a real achievement for the Creative Foundation.

Although McIntyre's show has sold out, there is plenty more going on over the long weekend.

On Saturday, Tony Allen, the 'Godfather of alternative comedy', will be running a stand-up workshop for aspiring comics. There is a preparatory exercise which needs to be completed before the event.

BBC Radio 1's resident magician Chris Cox exerts his unique brand of magic and psychology on Saturday at 6pm, demonstrating the skills that earned him five-star reviews at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and his debut West End show.

Watch the jaw-dropping antics of a mind reader who says he can't read minds in this hilarious and hugely entertaining show.

See six great comedians for just £10/£8 with Lonestar Comedy Club's Stand and Deliver at 8pm on Saturday. Fergus Craig, Gerry Howell, Danielle Ward, Anil Desai, Terry Saunders and Jim Smallman will keep the laughs coming at a recession-beating price.

Sunday sees a great line-up of free events and workshops for kids by improvisation troupe The Noise Next Door, Little Bulb Theatre, Usifu Jalloh and Emmanuel the Magnificent. At 4pm Ray Peacock will host the comedy trivia quiz, to



FESTIVAL LINE-UP: The Noise Next Door, the Scottish Falsetto Sock Puppet Theatre and comedian Michael McIntyre are booked

see who can take the crown.

The Variety Four-Pack at 8pm offers a great line-up of Rob Deering, Pete Firman and the Scottish Falsetto Sock Puppet Theatre, with Ray Peacock acting as compere.

Deering's award-winning music-based comedy has earned appearances on BBC3's Annually Retentive, BBC2's Never Mind The Full Stops and regular guest spots on Channel 4's Big Brother's Big Mouth.

Firman has become one of the country's leading conjurors since his appearances on Channel 4's late night magic show Dirty Tricks, while hecklers are warned to beware of the razor-sharp and often confrontational Peacock.

The Scottish Falsetto Sock Puppet Theatre presents an extraordinary show featuring songs, sketches, socks, violence and Shakespeare. They will also be performing a family-friendly show at 2pm on Sunday.

Bank Holiday Monday offers comedy for kids with James Campbell, the world's only stand-up for children, starting at 11.30am. The festival draws to a close with the return of The Noise Next Door at 3pm. To book tickets call 01303 858500 or visit www.standupfolkestone.com.FOR MORE THEATRE AND ENTERTAINMENT VISIT yourkenttv.co.uk

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Visitors will be able to experience the excitement as Leeds Castle celebrates the 500th anniversary of Henry VIII's accession to the throne. There will be opportunities to meet the monarch as he goes on a walkabout in the 900-year-old castle's grounds.

Witness thrilling clashes between knights on horseback during the twice-daily jousts, staged by Europe's premier jousting company, the Knights of Royal England. The jousting arena, complete with its royal box, will be on the Cedar Lawn.

There will be plenty of Tudor-themed activities, courtesy of Hands on History, including cannon drill, archery practice and mini jousts for children.

Tickets cost £16.50/£13.50 for adults and £9.50 for children, while under-fours go free. For details call 01622 765400 or go to www.leeds-castle.com.



ULF HOELSCHER

Saturday, May 23
Mote Hall, Maidstone Leisure Centre



RENOWNED German violinist Ulf Hoelscher joins Maidstone Symphony Orchestra for the finale of its 98th concert season.

Hoelscher returns to play two popular works, Samuel Barber's 'The Violin Concerto' and the 'Introduction and Rondo Capriccio' by Saint-Saens. The concert will also feature Leonard Bernstein's 'West Side Story Symphonic Dances', Fauré's 'Pavane' and Ravel's 'Daphnis & Chloe Suite No 2'.

After studying with the famous teacher Max Rostal in Cologne, Hoelscher spent three years in the US before returning to Europe, where he would become one of the leading violinists of his generation. The diversity of his recordings with EMI reflect his broad repertoire, which has seen him performing in the world's most important



musical centres and touring extensively in Europe, Russia, the Far East, Australia, East Germany and Japan.

The concert starts at 7.30pm and tickets are

priced from £12 to £21 or £5 for students. To book call the Membership Secretaries on 01622 736392, call the leisure centre box office on 0845 155 2277 or visit www.mso.org.uk.

PROMS IN THE PARK

Saturday, May 23
Whatman Millennium Park, Maidstone



GET ready to wave that flag and raise your voice in celebration at this year's Proms In The Park.

Families and prom-goers are invited to bring along a picnic and join in the fun at the annual event, which will be providing an evening of great musical entertainment. Best of all, the event is free, so all the family can enjoy wonderful music with no charge.

All the usual stirring favourites from the Last Night of the Proms can be heard, including Rule Britannia, Jerusalem and Land of Hope and Glory. There will also be the chance for the audience to join in with Queen, Abba and Oliver! medleys, becoming a 1,000-strong chorus with Phantom of the Opera star, Jill Washington.

People can enjoy picnics from 4pm, allowing plenty of time to prepare for the concert which starts at 7.30pm. A firework finale will bring the event to a close at about 9.15pm.

For more information call Hazlitt Arts Centre on 01622 758611 or visit www.hazlittartscentre.co.uk.



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TOMORROW'S event at the Beluga Bar in Bank Street is for anyone who left the following schools between 2000 and 2002: The Cornwallis School, The Malling School, Maplesden Noakes School and Sutton Valence School.

With DJs spinning the hits from the appropriate school years, the event starts at 8pm and entry is free before 11pm. Reunion groups are on Facebook.

Hear the true tale of Prostitutes Padre

THE true story of the Prostitutes Padre is presented as a music hall show in The Missionary's Position.

Penny Dreadful tells the tale of the Rector of Stiffkey, who spent six days a week ministering to the needs of London's scarlet women in the 1900s. The show is at the Trinity Theatre, Tunbridge Wells, 8pm Friday. Tickets cost £12.50/£10.50. Book at www.trinitytheatre.net or 01892 678678.

Hear the cream of rock and roll at tribute night

CELEBRATE the career of a guitar legend with the Cream of Clapton Tribute Show at Maidstone's Exchange Studio.

Considered by many to be one of the greatest guitar artists, Eric Clapton has been inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame an unprecedented three times. The show starts at 7.30pm on Friday. Tickets cost £15/£14. Book at www.hazlittartscentre.co.uk or call 01622 758611.

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Miley Cyrus searches for love in this rites of passage drama, interspersed with musical sequences. The movie promotes the family unit and the value of enduring friendship ahead of material wealth.

Star Trek's revival has a message for our times

BY KATE WHITING

MORE than four decades, six TV series and ten films since the crew of the Enterprise first pledged 'to boldly go where no man has been before', Captain Kirk and his pointy-eared sidekick Spock are back.

The original 1966 series wasn't an instant hit, but such is the impact of Star Trek on modern culture, that even the staunchest non-fan could pull a Vulcan salute and would know that if you need beaming up, Scotty's your man.

So how do you tackle a new film to bring the brand back up to warp speed and attract a new generation of fans, without offending Trekkies at the same time?

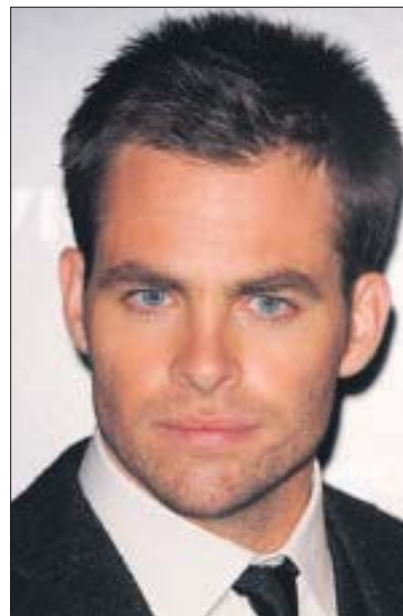
Find a young, hip cast worthy of wearing the iconic primary colour Lycra tops and bring back Leonard Nimoy to pass the Spock baton to Heroes' star Zachary Quinto, is how.

This was the mission Lost creator JJ Abrams' boldly embarked on. The self-professed non-fan also decided to take the franchise back to its roots, showing the 23rd century launch of the U.S.S. Enterprise and how its crew all came to be there.

Central to the film is the relationship between James T. Kirk, made famous by William Shatner, and his one-day First Officer, who goes only by the name Spock.

From the moment they meet at the Starfleet Academy, there's no love lost, with Kirk – played by rising star Chris Pine – calling Spock a "pointy-eared b****d".

Like other origins movies, including Batman Begins, JJ takes us back to his characters' childhoods to show us what shapes and motivates them.



BOLDLY GOING: Chris Pine stars as Captain Kirk

The film opens with Kirk's birth, as his father, captain of the doomed U.S.S. Kelvin is locked in battle with a rogue Romulan ship.

Flash forward to Kirk on Earth as a young man, in a bloody bar brawl with students of the Starfleet Academy after trying to chat up Uhura (Zoe Saldana).

He finally gets inspired to make something of his life by Captain Pike (Bruce Greenwood), who challenges him to fulfil his father's thwarted potential.

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Meanwhile, on the planet Vulcan, young Spock is being bullied by his classmates because he's half human and half Vulcan.

At the Starfleet Academy, Spock despises Kirk's impulsiveness and Kirk is equally frustrated by the officious Spock.

Chris Pine, 28, explains: "Zach and I wanted the audience to see two very bright, very obstinate young men who are destined to butt heads throughout their lives, but will grow to love each other for that very reason."

Chris is sure the film, like the original series, will impress and endure.

"Right now in an economic crisis, to present a vision of people working together instead of division, I just think it's a positive, wonderful message."

STAR TREK
Certificate 12A

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Good advice for difficult times

THE experts can't seem to agree – one day we are told the green shoots of recovery are peeping through, the next they are nowhere to be seen.

Whatever the truth, it's certainly going to be a while before we

are all sleeping easy in our beds again and there are still plenty of choppy waters to deal with.

That's why this latest edition of Money Matters has plenty of good advice for consumers and businesses who are all looking to reduce their costs, save money and do some serious planning for the future.

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Family Fun Weekend with Jousting	19 – 20 September
Tudor Flower Festival	7 – 11 October
Half Term Heraldry	24 – 30 October

Keep up to date with events by visiting www.leeds-castle.com

Follow Dad's Army to defeat the recession

By **TONY PATEY**

DON'T panic, Mr Mainwaring – one in every three South East small business bosses are evoking the Blitz-type attitude and keeping their chins up as the economic bombs rain down during the recession.

They're refusing to let the recession get them down, insisting it has had no impact on their personal lives, according to new research from independent financier Bibby Financial Services.

However, that does mean that two out of every three seem to have the opposite view ...

Anyway, many business owners in the South East are adopting various ways of coping:

- 47 per cent are refusing to cut out what could be seen as luxuries, such as Blackberries or company cars, which they clearly see as essential
- 69 per cent are continuing with holiday



- plans or other time off
 - 76 per cent are not getting any less sleep
 - 71 per cent are not seeing any less of their family
 - 82 per cent are maintaining a healthy lifestyle
 - just 12 per cent are drinking more alcohol.
- Andy Leopold, Bibby's spokesperson for the



MILITARY STYLE: Businesspeople are taking Corporal Jones' advice and refusing to panic, in fact many of them are hanging onto their 'luxuries' like Blackberries and company cars

South East said: "Some might consider a Blackberry or company car a luxury, but for many small business owners in the South East today these are simply essentials which are helping with the day-to-day running of their business.

"Whereas previously business owners in the region may have been prepared to neglect their personal lives in order to sustain their business, these days they recognise the importance of trying to maintain some sort of work life balance, instead seeing time away from the business, such as holiday, as a tool to help them survive.

"However, while it's good to see business owners in the South East remaining positive, they also need to be prudent financially to get

through the downturn and not completely throw caution to the wind.

"With 77 per cent of business owners in the region now scrutinising finances more carefully, it's clear cash flow remains king. Luckily there are still plenty of ways for the region's business owners to stay on top of cash-flow issues and ensure those close to them don't suffer in the process."

Indeed, all but 11 per cent of business owners in the South East polled say they have learned something new from the experience of this recession. Thirty three per cent have learned to keep a closer eye on cash flow, 26 per cent have learned to plan better for the future and 14 per cent say they have become more shrewd.

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Don't let debt recovery drag your business down

By **DAVID GREEN**

EVEN for companies currently managing to weather the economic storm there are still many challenges to face.

Not least is the fact that overdue bills or worse still, customer debts, are spiralling out of control.

Ultimately, debt recovery is becoming one huge headache and more businesses than ever are having to spend their time chasing debt.

Overdue bills can be a nightmare to manage, and if you're a smaller business whose survival is dependant on regular cash flow, the urgency of the situation is magnified.

A good cash flow is critical for companies to be able to pay their staff and suppliers; not to mention if they are to have any hope at all of generating income for the owners and shareholders of the business.

Taking the right steps from the outset will allow you to maximise getting the money rightly owed to you without damaging your business relationships.

The first step is to ensure your terms and conditions are clear regarding payment, and if you are going to use an external company to collect overdue payments, make your inten-



CHALLENGES: Take the right steps to maximise the chances of getting money owed to you

tions clear to your customer so there can be no misunderstandings.

A solution needs to be put into action swiftly to give you every chance of getting your money back at the lowest cost to you.

Many businesses find it hard to chase a customer for the debts, particularly where the customer is another business, as there is a risk that attempts to recover debts will be seen as aggressive and relationships can sour.

Many companies lack confidence in making heavier demands for payment. Fears of losing future business coupled with emotional bag-

gage can all too often interfere with this process.

But it is important not to lose sight of the fact the customer has failed to pay you the money they owe and you simply can't afford to jeopardise the financial stability of your own business or allow them to spiral into further debt.

These concerns can be avoided by a simple and effective recovery plan.

As the payment terms near their end, a 'friendly' phone call can, if necessary, be followed up in writing to instigate a gentle reminder of the outstanding payment due

and to re-emphasise your payment terms.

What has to be avoided is continual phone calls and letters chasing a debt as this wastes your time and stops you from concentrating on new business.

Enlisting the help of a recovery agent or a professional solicitor at the early stages could be beneficial in terms of saving you time and money in the long term, and it takes away the hassle and emotional concerns which often materialise.

However, debt collection agencies will usually charge a percentage of the total debt, which means they are likely to cherry-pick those larger debts and cases that will bring them a good guaranteed return, and this can be a costly option.

In our view, the most efficient debt recovery model is to use a combination of all the various options, but don't be afraid to allow those representing you to take the action that is necessary to recover the debt.

Knowing the right path to choose with a debt and what action to take if, and when, a judgement is obtained is extremely important as many cases get to judgement and then are unable to be enforced.

Debt recovery is not an exact science, but experience is all important.

• **David Green is spokesman for MTA Solicitors, which has an office in Bromley.**

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Home is where the office is



By **JOHN GUTHRIE** and **DOUG SKILTON**

WITH the dole queue getting longer and recession-battling bosses seeking ways to cut costs, increasing numbers of people are starting to work from home.

As many as one in seven of the working population are now homeworkers.

The attractions of remote working are clear: the potential release from rental overheads and the freeing up of commuting time.

But there are practical and legal issues which must be balanced against the saving from office overheads before setting aside part of the home for business use.

We'd like to consider those who work totally from home as opposed to the occasional home worker. In many cases internal alterations will be carried out to the home to facilitate that remote working.

Planning permission is required when-

ever there is a material change in the planning use of a property. It is a matter of fact and degree in each case whether there has been such a change.

The key question for people intending to run a business from home is whether the overall character of the house will change from being a private home as a result of the business.

The most important factor to consider is the question of whether the business use is subservient to the residential use. The right to use land for a primary planning use includes the right to use it for a subservient or 'ancillary' use.

However, there is no hard-and-fast rule for deciding the point at which running a business from home will fall outside the scope of ancillary use.

Much will turn on the nature of the business use, but judicial guidance suggests that anyone using more than 10 per cent of their home for business use could be at risk of requiring separate planning permission.

Planning permission may also be required for any physical alterations that are needed to make the property suitable for the business use.

Compliance with building regulations will also be needed if there are

any changes to the home. As an example, a hairdresser who decides to run their business from home should remember that not only do structural changes in the property require Building Regulation Consent but also simpler measures such as the installation of a washbasin.

Business rates, as opposed to council tax, will apply to the part of the home used exclusively for business.

Remote workers should consider getting a separate phone line for their business to claim tax relief on business calls and also about reclaiming VAT on anything bought for business purposes.

A remote worker should always check both their deeds and mortgage conditions, or their rental agreement, to ensure that there are no restrictions against running a business from home.

If necessary they should apply for consent under the deeds and mortgage.

Rubbish (often overlooked) is another problem area and business waste should not be put in domestic refuse bins. Plastic business waste bags can be expensive.

From a practical viewpoint, will customers of the business visit the home and upset the neighbours? If it is necessary to have client meetings should they be at the client's premises instead?

Finally, remember to check that using your home for business will not invalidate your buildings insurance policy.

• **John Guthrie is an associate and Doug Skilton is a solicitor at Tunbridge Wells based Thomson Snell & Passmore.**

HOME OFFICE: There are practical and legal issues to working from home



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Guaranteeing a return for your savings

By **JEREMY GATES**

IF YOU believe our economy sits on a powder keg of inflation – and some fear its return might be the only salvation for Britain if Government plans to borrow £700 billion are carried through – there are sound arguments for savings which guarantee an index-linked return.

If they ponder Chancellor Alistair Darling's words carefully, savers might want an alternative to banks or building societies for part of their savings. In any case, the three per cent-plus fixed-rate returns, now on offer from these institutions over two or three years, could look mean if inflation takes off.

It was therefore not coincidental that National Savings & Investments (NS&I) offered two new issues of Inflation Beating Savings certificates last week. Also called Index-linked

certificates, they enable savers to invest a maximum £15,000 per issue in three-year (19th issue) or five-year (46th issue) certificates.

Dax Harkins, NS&I senior savings strategist says they usually make a new issue of Index-linked certificates when they change the rate: "In this instance, the rate stays the same – Retail Prices Index (RPI) plus one per cent – if held for the full term, but investors wanted a new issue to allow them to put more money in."

Opportunity

As NS&I certificates are tax free, the equivalent rate is index-linking plus 1.25 per cent for basic rate taxpayers, and index-linking plus 1.67 per cent for higher rate taxpayers. On each anniversary, interest and index-linking are added to the certificate.

The last issue was in June, 2008, which effectively means NS&I offers an opportunity to salt away up to £15,000 per person per year, or £30,000 per couple, with returns free of income tax and capital gains tax (CGT), like ISAs.

Many savers value 100 per cent security for their cash. Index-linked Savings Certificates



SET: Putting your cash in National Savings & Investments certificates could be the answer

were launched by NS&I in 1975, and 600,000 investors hold £16bn in them against £39bn in Premium Bonds, which get more promotion.

With Premium Bond prizes falling to just one per cent, new £25 prizes have been introduced to ensure Bond holders win nearly one million prizes per month. With 39 billion Premium Bonds in circulation, the odds on any single bond winning are 36,000-1.

As Premium Bonds lose some appeal, the threat of inflation makes Index-linked certificates more attractive. If RPI goes negative they still guarantee the annual one per cent bonus on investments held to the end of their term. In fact, this is the first time a continuous period of deflation has been experienced since NS&I launched index-linked certificates.

With personal tax levels certain to rise after the next General Election, there is a strong case for using NS&I products to hold more savings outside the tax net. However, savers should remember Inflation Beating Savings pay no interest at all on withdrawals after one year, with returns thereafter weighted to favour those who remain for the full term.

"It won't have you jumping up and down with excitement, but this product already pays a better return than many instant access savings accounts, and returns could look good if inflation kicks in, maybe 18 months from now," Mark Dampier at Hargreaves Lansdown said.

Clearer

Kevin Mountford, Moneysupermarket.com, says NS&I products should be in any balanced savings portfolio: "With index-linking, you have the prospect of a fixed return, as opposed to accounts which are market-leading one moment and stragglers a few months later."

"Here there is the prospect of a definite return, over and above the cost of living."

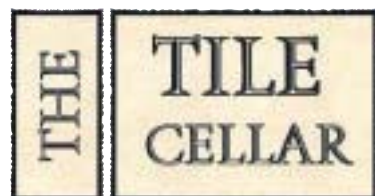
Andrew Hagger, Moneynet.co.uk, says for savers purely concerned with inflation, it's a good home for your money. But he is not sure he would tie up money for that long at present: "Consider the West Bromwich BS E-Bond, paying 4.3 per cent before tax on a one-year bond (min £5,000), or perhaps ICICI Bank's Instant Access paying 2.45 per cent on a minimum £1, until the trend on rates becomes clearer."

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EU acts to help small companies

By **GÜNTER VERHEUGEN**

European Commission Vice President, responsible for enterprise and industry policy

IN THIS present economic crisis everybody speaks about job losses in the big industries and big companies.

Governments are keen to take action and to find ways to support them. But there is also another side of the coin: who cares about the millions of small enterprises which are struggling for survival? I do.

Because I know, without entrepreneurs there are no enterprises, without enterprises there are no jobs. And, therefore, I am convinced that in the crisis we must strengthen our efforts to give small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) the best possible framework-conditions.

Not being paid for the goods and services delivered is bad for a business in any circumstances, but becomes dramatic today as the economic crisis reduces alternative sources of finance and diminishes demand. The distance to bankruptcy can get dangerously short.

As government at all levels puts imagination to work looking for any useful measure to counter the crisis, they should not forget about the simplest – avoid the huge amount of invoices for the purchase of goods and services which they pay late after delivery.

That is why the Commission has decided it was time to upgrade EU rules on late payment in commercial transactions and proposed public authorities should as a rule pay their bills within a maximum of 30 days.

As an incentive to clear the bills in time the



SMALL THINGS: Günter Verheugen sees the value of entrepreneurs and small enterprises

Commission suggests introducing a flat-rate compensation of five per cent cumulated with the late payment interest. In parallel, the European Commission commits itself to speed

up its own payment for the purchase of goods and services.

The proposal on late payments is only the latest in a series of initiatives to help SMEs taken by this European Commission since it took office in 2004 and which culminated with the proposal of the Small Business Act (SBA) in June of last year. This has found the agreement of all member States and the European Parliament.

The SBA puts forward a complete policy framework to improve the overall approach to entrepreneurship and to promote SMEs' growth by helping them tackle the remaining problems which hamper their development.

The act applies to all companies which have fewer than 250 employees: 23 million across the EU.

Key to this new policy framework is the application of the Think Small First principle. Henceforth, all public authorities in the EU are called to ensure that SMEs' interests are always taken into account in policy making.

The Commission has revised state aid rules to encourage Member States to do more for SMEs since public funding for training, research and development, environmental protection and other types of aid is important for SMEs.

We have proposed a new statute for a European Private Company which will allow SMEs to start up and operate according to the same company law provisions throughout the European Union.

Finally, I am happy to add that the Member States agreed to open up the option to apply reduced Value Added Tax rates for locally supplied services, including labour intensive services, such as hairdressing, catering, and repair.

To encourage and inspire new entrepreneurs

who are planning to set up a new business, we have also launched an Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs – a European exchange programme to help entrepreneurs acquire relevant skills for managing an SME by spending time working in another EU country with an experienced entrepreneur.

To free the hands of SMEs, we are cutting administrative burdens with full speed, eyeing the target to reduce administrative burdens on companies stemming from EU legislation by 25 per cent by 2012.

For example, in January the Commission adopted a proposal for a revision of the VAT Directive to remove the barriers to electronic invoicing. The yearly reduction potential could be as high as 18 billion euros in the mid-term.

Extra savings

In the case of company law, the Commission proposed to allow Member States to exclude micro-enterprises, with ten employees or less, from the scope of EU accounting directives, which could bring additional savings of seven billion Euros.

Moreover 24 Member States have given themselves a better regulation agenda.

Since access to finance is essential for SMEs, notably in times of crisis, the European Investment Bank devoted 30 billion euros to SMEs in Europe in the form of new loans granted via commercial banks. This scheme, approved at the end of 2008, is actively supported by the European Commission.

Now is the time, once and for all, to cement the needs of SMEs in EU policy. To get out of the current crisis we need to clear the path for those who want to create more jobs and are the key drivers of innovation, who will need to master the ship towards a low carbon economy.

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TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY TO ALL OFFERS

Firms are helping you out to help themselves

By **TONY PATEY**

THE truth always comes out – and when firms dip into their pockets to help staff being booted out the door through no fault of their own it's not because the companies are being nice and kind.

The real reasons, according to one of our biggest recruitment consultancies, are to maintain a good reputation, hold onto key employees – and help managers to deliver the bad news.

It's euphemistically called outplacement, but it basically means easing unwanted or unneeded executives out of a company by pro-

viding company-paid assistance in finding them new jobs.

With short-term strategy firms cutting back on staff – as they always do come an economic downturn – more individuals are getting this type of support.

Now a study by Reed Consulting has revealed that aside from what it says is the moral obligation, there are many reasons why firms cough up to offer help.

A company spokesman: "In the event of a firm having to make redundancies, there is always the risk its reputation among potential employees and customers will be damaged.

"Three quarters of firms felt provision of outplacement could improve the organisation's reputation, while a half believed it could help make them be seen as an employer of choice."

Also, perversely, firms think it helps them

retain staff. "Given its common proximity to redundancy programmes, respondents felt the provision of outplacement support helped the employer retain and motivate those staff not directly affected.

"It is a commonly held view that up to 25 per cent of top performers leave an organisation within 90 days of a major change announcement being made. Two-thirds of respondents agreed that offering outplacement support for staff being made redundant helped retain those who remained."

The study also found that more than 70 per cent of employers believe offering outplacement helps line managers implement redundancies "with a clearer conscience" and 87 per cent of those interviewed felt it eased the pressure on them.

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REPUTATION: Employers help staff move on because they feel it encourages others to stay with them

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Are mortgage rates about to start going up?

EIGHT weeks after the base rate hit a mind-boggling 0.5 per cent, last week's decision by the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) to leave rates unchanged hardens the consensus that mortgage rates go one way from here – up.

On the way down, tracker loans were a smart move for borrowers, shrinking monthly repayments close to zero in some cases.

As a new order takes shape, fixed-rate loans look a good defensive move for borrowers who fear rates, when they rise again, could stay high for some time.

Among lenders, there's a spring 'nip' in the air, a sense the worst is behind us.

Gloom began to lift in mid-April when our biggest lender, Halifax, offered to pay up to £1,000 of a homebuyer's council tax for a year to any borrower taking a mortgage with a deposit of at least 10 per cent.

Are lenders actually keen to find new customers with house prices still falling, possibly by eight to 10 per cent for the rest of 2009? Plainly they are, because rivals have followed Halifax's lead.

Woolwich, the lending arm of Barclays, has slashed rates on two, three, four and five-year fixes, starting at 3.69 per cent for two years (to maximum loan to value (LTV) of 70 per cent).

For remortgagers (max LTV 75 per cent), Abbey reckons its three-year fix at 4.09 per cent, seven-year at 4.99 per cent and 15-year at 5.38 per cent, are its lowest in a decade.

Abbey's Nici Auchlam-Gardiner says their research shows that for remortgagers, a third are looking for a tracker, and over half will choose a two-year tracker.

"With a best buy rate of Base Rate plus 2.45 per cent, borrowers should also seriously consider the two-year tracker."

Andrew Hagger at Moneynet.co.uk isn't so sure: "There is a feeling trackers won't look so good once rates move up again. New trackers around 2.5 per cent over base mean a rate of 5.5 per cent if base rate gets back to three per cent," he says.

And trackers often have Early Repayment Charges lurking in the small print, expensive when borrowers get another loan.

Fee-free deals are back in fashion too: Yorkshire Bank offers remortgages with no arrangement fees on fixed-rate, offset and current account loans.

But Hagger says fee free is not always cheapest: "On a £150,000 loan over 25 years (75 per cent LTV), for instance, an HSBC fix at 3.99 per cent with a £599 fee costs £1,570 less over three years than Alliance & Leicester's fee free loan at 4.69 per cent."

Perhaps the most encouraging sign mortgage markets are easing is HSBC's £1bn offered as 90 per cent LTV loans – a two-year

By JEREMY GATES

fix at 4.99 per cent (fee £1,499), a two-year fix at 5.49 per cent (fee £199) and a lifetime tracker at 4.09 per cent plus base rate (currently 4.59 per cent) with non-refundable fee of £999. To qualify, HSBC borrowers must open a current account, which charges a monthly fee – and with access to current account details, the bank could make further efforts to sell financial products.

HSBC, with its first direct subsidiary, could take 13 per cent of the 2009 mortgage market – against three per cent in 2007. It isn't saddled with unprofitable mortgages hitting rival lenders who grabbed market share before boom turned to bust.

Ray Boulger at brokers John Charcol says households should focus on two strategies at this stage. Firstly, money saved on low mortgage rates should go to pay outstanding debt on mortgages, credit cards, and other loans. Don't splurge on luxuries and holidays.

Secondly, rates will be higher than they are today, so borrowers should be in a position to absorb them with comfort: "The key question

is when rates rise. We could see a move in early-2010, or low rates could stay for two years. A big danger is that when the Bank of England injects its second £75bn into the economy – the first expires at the end of May – inflationary pressures could be unleashed, and rate rises would be needed to control them."

Whilst prices keep falling, borrowers who delay remortgaging could have problems finding a new loan in a year, if they need a higher LTV because of falling values.

Darren Cook at Moneyfacts.co.uk is equally fearful that lenders' big concern is to play safe: "Banks, far from predicting the end of the slump, are hedging bets by increasing the number of their best mortgages to those fortunate enough to have a 40 per cent deposit. The average mortgage rate for a 60 per cent LTV is 4.29 per cent, compared to 5.29 per cent six months ago, and availability within this tier has risen too."

Boulger says some borrowers might still take a tracker loan with a 'droplock' option enabling them to lock into a fix later. There is a case, for example, for taking an HSBC tracker and switching when HSBC offers fixes for longer than two years. But borrowers may have to pay more for a higher LTV limit.

"People keen to remortgage get a nasty shock from valuations at five to 10 per cent lower than they expected," says Boulger. "My advice, if you have equity of less than 30 per cent, is to fix straightaway and in most cases, to take a five-year fix, which will look cheap if rates stay high for two to three years."

"Borrowers on low LTVs (below 75 per cent) may have a case for not rushing into a fix. They should keep an eye on available deals, to fix in late-2009/early-2010."

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Make a confident investment in key areas of business

KENT'S business advisory service Business Link, says there are three areas to focus on if you want your firm to survive in the downturn.

The report *The Rise of the Super SME Through the Recession* by research company Opinion Matters highlighted the fact that businesses which are confident about their future had increased or maintained levels of investment in one of the three key areas; IT, marketing and training.

Investment does not necessarily mean a big cash outlay. It can be an investment of time, resources and knowledge focus – making the most of affordable options freely available through general purpose technology such as the internet.

Almost half of all successful businesses surveyed (47 per cent) had kept up investment in IT, indicating the IT infrastructure they had in place was helping to keep the workforce optimised for success.

For example, businesses with a mobile-enabled workforce were found to be 60 per cent more likely to forecast an increase in growth during the next 12 months – indicating the vital role flexible working practices



DEVELOPMENT: IT is one of three key areas worth focusing on for the future

and technologies play in successful business.

Among successful businesses, 43 per cent had actually increased investment in marketing, contributing to their success and long-term prospects.

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Rather than cutting training budgets over the past 12 months, successful businesses were more likely to have increased investment, with 39 per cent of these actually spending more on training in the last 12 months than ever before.

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Keep people in the know

By **TONY PATEY**

CLASSROOMS can be crucibles of delight – and angst – when it comes to doing ‘practicals’, especially in something like business studies, which most people wouldn’t think of as hands-on subject like chemistry.

But good teachers know memory is best primed when doing something rather than just being told



about it, and business studies is no exception. Take communication, one of the most important management tools.

I used to start my A-level communication module with Chinese whispers – sticking a student in each corner of the room and getting them to verbally pass round a short message I wrote down for the first person to memorise.

We all know the party game – the message ends up totally distorted at the end when the last student says what they had been told.

Once did it with Chinese students; it blew their minds, because in China they had to sit, listen and learn by rote. Actually physically doing something like this was alien, almost embarrassing, for them – but the lesson was still learnt.

When you’re running a business, word-of-mouth rumours can get out of hand and badly damage, even ruin, you. Send out the right message, in the right way, to internal and external stakeholders. And it’s even more important in an economic downturn.

As a reporter I’ve had emails about what was going to happen in newspaper groups at the other end of the country – and when the announcements came I found the info I had received was only vaguely right.

A rumour once swept round the world – in minutes – in the 80s that “Reagan was dead” – panic in all the markets, Wall Street and our stock exchange went berserk. But it was another Regan, different spelling, in the US administration – not dear old Ronnie.

It can be easy to hide, take a quick holiday perhaps, when there’s bad news to give out, even just to keep inside your office and hope the world’ll go away. But it doesn’t work.

“Do not hide,” is the advice of Paul A Argenti, professor of corporate communication at Tuck School of Business, Dartmouth College. “Not hearing from you will breed additional suspicion and mistrust among stakeholders.”

Communicate often and early, he says, and talk to people directly – hearing information straight from the horse’s mouth gives reassurance and stops distortion – and people can question you directly, not second-hand. That alone can diffuse difficult situations.

Also, he says, get inside the media’s head. Try seeing how the press might spin your message.

A difficult one, that. A lot depends on the medium, and this is where some really specialised knowledge is called for, usually from someone in PR who has had a lot of experience as a journalist or broadcaster.

What they should tell you is that trying to put a gloss on something that doesn’t need it will soon be swept aside, and the information will be seen for what it is.

Very few people have succeeded in hoodwinking the media over bad news – the only time I’ve ever seen it done was when Harold Wilson was prime minister in the 70s.

Inflation was rocketing, shock horror. Mr Wilson, a very clever man, brought in the first index-linked savings certificates – they were called Granny Bonds because they were for retired people (but, of course, everyone gave money to their grannies to cash in on them).

The media gave the thumbs-up because people now had the chance to make some money. Until some maverick City reporter on a tabloid stood up at a press conference and asked: “Isn’t this giving people a vested interest in rising inflation, when we should be doing everything we can to bring it down?”

No guesses for who that was...



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Discover how a school banking project is helping youngsters prepare for looking after their own finances

Essential guide to where you can save

■ Living Out log cabin store in Chestfield, Maidstone, is offering 15 per cent off plus free delivery on all DIY log cabins

■ County Garage Motors in Herne Bay is offering free protection pack worth up to £400. Free full tank of fuel, free Gard X Paint and interior protection, free front and rear mats, on all new or used vehicles

■ Wells Clinic in Ashford is offering £50 off skin lifting and tightening lines and wrinkle treatments. Wrinkle reduction (b/tox)

■ Baileys Nissan in Canterbury is offering 15 per cent off all servicing

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TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY TO ALL OFFERS

When it's time to move

By **TONY PATEY**

EVEN in the good times companies close or are taken over. So, if the worst does happen, what do you need to do?

Business Link has the following advice about the key points you will need to consider if you are thinking of selling or closing.

Who you need to tell

Your tax and any official records concerning your business will need to be up to date and complete when you sell your company.

You should also inform all your customers and suppliers so they have the chance to raise any outstanding payments, credits and liabilities, and you can account for them when you finalise your accounts and tax affairs.

You will need to follow the necessary statutory procedures and form filling to resolve any outstanding tax, VAT and National Insurance matters with HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC).

If you are selling a company and there will be changes to its secretary or directors, you must inform Companies House.

If you employ more than 50 people you will also need to take account of the Information and Consultation of Employees (ICE) Regulations.

Employees

You have obligations to safeguard their rights, finalise their pay and deductions, and issue their P45 form. You may also be able to offer them help in coping with the challenges arising from losing their job.



STAFF: As an employer you are obliged to safeguard the rights of your workforce

Tax and VAT when closing

The position of an employee with regards to rights to redundancy pay, company pension payments, etc, will vary according to the circumstances of the business closure (eg, insolvency, voluntary liquidation), the business type (eg, partnership, limited company, sole trader) and the length of the employee's employment to date.

When you close your business, HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) will need to assess how much your final tax bill should be. It is essential to let HMRC know of any possible tax liabilities you have as soon as they are known, even if you are currently unable to pay the tax

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on from your business



PAPERWORK: Assets will need to be brought up to date for your final day of business

you owe. If business assets are sold and the proceeds go to the individual owners of the business, or if shares in the company are sold, the individuals concerned may have to pay Capital Gains Tax.

If you are VAT registered, you will need to inform HMRC. Once they are satisfied that your registration should be cancelled they will

confirm the date and issue a final VAT return, on which you account for VAT on stock and certain assets on hand at the close of business on the day your registration is cancelled.

Insolvency and bankruptcy

Bankruptcy applies to individuals, and is one route you can take if you are a sole trader

or partner in a partnership and have debts you cannot pay.

It frees you from your debts, but your assets are divided among your creditors and restrictions may be placed on your future business activities by a Bankruptcy Restrictions Order issued by a court if your conduct is considered to have been dishonest or blameworthy – this can last between two years and 15 years.

A company may be forced to close by being taken to court by its creditors, lenders, shareholders, or by the Government or legal authorities seeking to wind up the business.

Alternatively, the owners or directors of the business may decide not to continue operating the business and apply to have the business wound up.

The court may rule that the company is passed into the hands of the Official Receiver. The receiver runs the company in the best interests of creditors and shareholders until its liquidation – ie, the sale of the company's assets. Any money raised is used to pay off the company's debts.

Tax and VAT when selling

You will need to follow the necessary statutory procedures to resolve any outstanding tax, VAT and National Insurance matters with HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC).

When you sell a business, you may have to pay Capital Gains Tax if you made a profit – referred to as a gain – from the sale of the assets. But, if you use the proceeds from the sale to buy another business, you might be able to defer the gain through business asset roll-over relief.

If your company is registered for VAT, contact HMRC and complete form VAT 7 to cancel your registration, or form VAT 68 to transfer your registration to the new owner.

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Divorce doesn't have to split up your business

NOT all problems faced by businesspeople are just in the boardroom and workshop.

If you own a business and you're going through a divorce you can take some comfort from a more realistic approach towards the valuation of your assets, says a Kent lawyer.

Susi Gillespie, a solicitor specialising in divorce at law firm Furley Page, says the change of heart follows a recent High Court judgment where a wife's claim following a 15-year marriage hinged on the estimated value of her husband's restaurant business.

The wife reckoned it was worth £5.3 million and the husband £1.7m. In summing up, the judge stressed that the valuation of a business was an art not a science and ultimately a matter of opinion. He also pointed out that the business in question had been operating successfully at the same site for more than 30 years, so it couldn't be defined as solely matrimonial property.

The judge refuted the wife's unsubstantiated claim that the family had received benefits in kind from the business which were equivalent to £80,000 a year.

Ms Gillespie said: "Detailed evidence from forensic accountants and an expensive dispute over the exact value of the business may be pointless if the business is the means by which the husband is going to earn his income and maintain the family in the future."

"The case also shows that where a business was started before a marriage, the husband



FALL OUT: Susi Gillespie, inset, says the courts are more realistic about business assets

will get some credit for the value it had already acquired so its total value won't be treated as part of the matrimonial pot. Just as important, this case highlights the need for allegations of fringe benefits from a business

to be properly demonstrated if they're going to be reflected in the value of a business."

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BIG SAVINGS: Check out small cars like the Chevrolet Matiz and Mazda2 to cut your fuel bills and emissions – and your road tax

Road tax weapon is blunted but drivers can save money

By **STEVE LOADER**

GOVERNMENT efforts to use road tax to beat drivers into giving up so-called gas guzzlers have met with mixed success.

There can be no doubt that escalating tax or vehicle excise duty (VED) over the past couple of years has helped fuel downsizing, but there was outcry after the March, 2008, Budget at 'draconian' rates to be applied to larger cars, especially with the recession looming.

Consequently, Chancellor Alistair Darling backtracked last November and proposed amended charges from April 1, 2009, to soften the blow at the top end of the market, though the Government says VED will continue to be amended in future to maintain the downward force in vehicle sizes and emissions.

They will also continue to be based on CO2 emissions rather than fuel consumption and apply only to cars registered after March 1, 2001; inconsistent emissions data on older cars means these are taxed simply at £120/year if the engine is 1,549cc or less and then £185 if it is above – something of a bargain for the owners of large older 'gas guzzlers' if they are content to bear higher fuel bills, opt for a £1,500-2,000 LPG (liquid petroleum gas) conversion or cover relatively few miles.

The new rates are weighted even more in favour of the latest, cleanest and most miserly small cars. Models emitting 100g/km of CO2 or less, like the new Ford Fiesta ECONetic, for instance, qualify for Band A or zero rating.

The payable steps are: Bands B and C (101-120g/km) – £35; Bands D and E (121-140g/km) – £120; Band F (141-150g/km) – £125; Band G (151-160g/km) – £150; Bands H and I (161-180g/km) – £175; Bands J and K (181-225g/km) – £215; Band L (226-255g/km) – £405; Band M (255g/km plus) – £405.

Essential guide to where you can save

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■ Bones on Beds in Herne Bay is offering 10 per cent off mattresses

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■ Hobbs Parker car auctions company in Ashford is offering cars from £500 every Monday and Wednesday, Orbital Park Ashford

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Fuel for thought

THERE are signs that diesel – the wonderfuel of the past – could run out of puff as the race to cut emissions and save money gets tougher.

Its original appeal was the cheapness of the fuel, greater mpg and the better low down pulling power of the engines and their ability to meet tighter emissions legislation.

However, diesel now commands an increasing premium against petrol and there are doubts whether the engines can continue to meet ever tougher emission laws.

Meanwhile, petrol has hit back with smaller, lighter and cleaner engines with turbocharging for flexibility, while there are other options emerging to save money and the planet.

Hybrid

These partner conventional engines with electric units, but two powerplants and power supplies – fuel tank plus batteries – mean extra weight, while production complexity raises prices so buyers must cover many miles to balance this. Motorway mpg is hardly better than a standard car. High toxicity of the batteries is also a worry at the end of the car's life.

LPG

Liquid petroleum gas seems an excellent alternative fuel due to lower duty and emissions and cheaper car tax. However, the



IN THE TANK: Diesel versions of cars like the Peugeot 207 (main picture) have fuelled the drive to small diesels, but is petrol fighting back? Alternatively you can buy a petrol and LPG Proton GEN-2 (top) for the same price as a standard petrol model

calorific value and consequent mpg is slightly lower than petrol and it will cost at least £1,500 to convert an existing vehicle.

There are more LPG filling points across the country than before though and LPG costs about half that of petrol and diesel at the pump and emits less CO₂ and with fewer NO_x and particulates.

Electric

These should be cheap to run, but battery technology cannot yet guarantee ranges to sat-

isfy. There is the worry too that emissions are simply transferred from an exhaust pipe to the chimney of a fossil fuel-burning power station.

Biofuels

Fuel derived partly from vegetable matter appeals since plants absorb CO₂ during growth and simply release it again when burned. Most road fuels in the UK will contain at least five per cent biofuel by next year, but there is concern that using arable land to grow 'biofuel' will strain global food supplies.

REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL

1 A new Rio for £5,195.*
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2 Cleaner, more efficient cars are cheaper to run.
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3 The Government giving away money.
Okay, so it's the same as reason one, but it's so good we couldn't let it slide. Just hurry, before they change their minds.



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Drive clever – save better

By **STEVE LOADER**

MAN and machine in harmony can slash pounds off your motoring bill.

The key is to downsize and run a cheaper car and then save even more by smarter driving and journey planning.

Avoid short journeys and get fitter by walking or cycling; a cold engine wastes fuel and can produce 60 per cent more pollution than a warm one and short car journeys require extra servicing and wear the engine faster.

If you must drive then follow these tips from the Institute of Advanced Motorists and RAC Foundation:

- Plan your route to save strain on car and driver. Take the most direct route – a sat nav can help – and go off peak if possible. If you commute, think about car sharing, Park and Ride bus schemes or other public transport.
- Have your vehicle serviced regularly. Neglected engines reduce fuel economy by ten per cent or more. Catalytic converters do clean emissions, but only when they are properly maintained.
- Check tyres – under-inflated tyres need replacing more often (itself an environmental problem), are dangerous and waste fuel. Check pressures weekly.
- Obey speed limits to save money and stay legal. Feather the throttle as you reach cruising speed; 56mph uses 25 per cent less fuel than 70mph and a smoother driving style saves fuel.
- Accelerate briskly without racing the engine – pulling away too fast uses up to 60 per cent more fuel. Intelligent gear changes



SAVINGS: You can cut motoring bills through better driving and downsizing to a city car like the new Nissan Pixo or Skoda Fabia supermini

at modest engine speeds can save up to 15 per cent in fuel.

- Reduce drag – remove roof racks and carriers when not in use. Open windows cause drag and lower fuel economy. Remove unnecessary and heavy boot luggage and accessories and wide tyres that add rolling resistance. Air conditioning costs fuel too so

try to use the fan and vents unassisted.

- Buy green fuel and use less. Look for low sulphur diesel (City diesel) or cleaner petrol (low sulphur/aromatics). Consider a conversion to LPG (liquid petroleum gas) – half the price of petrol and cleaner.
- Think ahead – there is no point rushing and then having to brake suddenly.

- Be a tank miser. Why fill the tank right to the brim and slow down your car by carrying more weight than is necessary?
- Turn off the engine after two minutes to save fuel and emissions if stuck in a jam.

• **For more eco driving tips see Julie Maddocks' online video report at:**
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Essential guide to where you can save

■ Blakes Hair & Beauty in Canterbury is offering 10 per cent discount when booking together a manicure and pedicure plus any two waxings of your choice

■ Maidstone Kia in Maidstone is offering free set of mats with any new car purchased before May 31

■ KOS is offering all-seasons duck duvet, two duvets that button together from only £39.99. Save over 50 per cent

■ Wildlife Heritage Foundation Animal Park in Ashford is offering an amazing day being close to big cats. All-day dedicated guide with buffet lunch, tea/coffee for only £99

■ Robins and Day Motors in Maidstone, Canterbury and Rochester are offering MOTs from £39.99. Service and MOT from £129.99 and seasonal checks from £19.99

■ H&H Flooring in Deal is offering free underlay upgrade on all carpets

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■ Canterbury Hyundai in Canterbury is offering £29.95 MOTs while you wait

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TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY TO ALL OFFERS

New car deal starts

By **STEVE LOADER**

REACTION to the Government's £2,000 incentive towards scrapping an older car in return for a new one was lukewarm from trade and customers alike.

Carmakers and dealers could also be forgiven for biting their lips on learning that they must contribute half the Government's two grand giveaway.

Nevertheless, most of the trade has not only embraced the deal, but put extra incentives on the table, such as even more cash, extra specification and zero per cent finance – though this is no longer a big deal when interest rates are so low.

On the other hand, consumers with savings will know they are receiving precious little return and it is tempting to seek a psychological boost from buying a new motor that should be cheaper to fuel and tax.

Canny buyers will also know they should get a shed-load of discount at the moment, whether or not they currently drive a 'banger' ten years old or more and qualify for the scrap-page grant.

Of course, anyone who has a scrapper to cash in has a further bargaining chip not to be tossed lightly into the deal.

Britain's market leader Ford says buyers can expect up to £5,000 off some of its cars, including the scrappage allowance.

Look at the extremes of the market to make the best use of the scheme though. A £2,000 grant buys a lot of any small car like the Hyundai i10 – Germany's scrappage scheme



OFF THE ROAD: The new scheme encourages you to send your old car for scrap

has boosted i10 sales by 662 per cent – and you could not expect usually to get a few hundred quid off when profit margins on small cars match their size. However, a £2,000 handout makes it more affordable to someone on a tight budget and it will be cheaper to fuel and tax and better for the environment.

At the other end of the scale, what about that Beemer you always wanted? Check out a BMW 116d (from £17,605). You would normally struggle to get money off – certainly not £2,000 – and you start saving even more with an average of 60mpg.

Anyone buying a new car is still taking a big step though unless they aim to save longer term though lower fuel bills and road tax.

The Government is using escalating road

tax or VED (vehicle excise duty) to drive people into smaller and cleaner cars and a new scale of zero to £405/year came into force on April 1 (see previous page) and is set to become tougher.

By 2010, gas guzzling limos or 4x4s may face £950 road tax in the first year, although anyone spending £50-100,000 on a car is unlikely to be put off by such a paltry sum. As a result, some manufacturers have produced models exempt from VED, by sneaking below the 100g/km CO₂ emissions mark into band-A.

Most manufacturers also now have an 'Eco' sub-branding for their lowest emission models – Vauxhall uses the ecoFLEX sub-branding.

Brilliant as they are, 'eco' models often cost more since they have diesel engines and spe-

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to make more sense



INCENTIVE: Vauxhall has embraced the Government's scrappage programme, but is topping up the £2,000 treasury/manufacture grant with cashbacks and other deals on certain models – the popular Corsa supermini qualifies for zero per cent finance as well as grant aid

cial 'green' features that do not yet deliver the economy of scale savings available to makers across the whole model range.

What is more, saving road tax is not such a great incentive when many conventional superminis sit in the lowest road tax band of £35 a year anyway; over three years with an

eco model, saving £105 is irrelevant if you spend more on buying that car and are then putting expensive diesel in the tank.

So, check out conventional equivalents of eco models and don't dismiss petrol power; that fuel is still cheaper and makes sense for low mileage users, while emission and consumption levels

are closing the gap on the diesel equivalents.

Finally, look again at what you have to part-exchange; you might have lost a packet in depreciation on that big 4x4, but work out what it will cost you to run it for the next three years – it might be a lot less than the cost of chopping it for a new car.

Essential guide to where you can save

■ Lexterten furniture store in Westgate-on-Sea is offering £100 off Elevating TV cabinets

■ Old Sawmills furniture store in Ashford is offering 20 per cent off all showroom items

■ Oliver Carpets in Ramsgate and Herne Bay is offering 10 per cent off when you spend more than £250

■ Pomphreys Motors in Bapchild, Sittingbourne is offering half-price MOT with every service

■ Village Hotel in Maidstone is offering £5 off the carvery lunch on any Bank Holiday Monday

■ Living Out log cabin store in Chestfield, Maidstone, is offering free installation on all standard range of cabins

■ Aylesford Self Storage in Aylesford is offering three months' free storage for a year for all new document storage clients

■ County Garage in Herne Bay is offering free health check and free 29-point including wash and vacuum

■ Baileys Nissan Motors in Canterbury is offering 15 per cent off MOTs

■ Medway Stoves solid fuel heating store in Medway is offering 15 per cent off all stoves and installations purchased before June 30, 2009

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Shock horror, author signing at Bluewater

INTERNATIONAL bestselling teenage horror writer Rachel Caine will be making a rare appearance at Bluewater this weekend.

The author of the Weather Warden and Morganville Vampires books will be signing copies at Waterstone's at 11am on Saturday. The fifth book in the Morganville Vampires series, Lord of Misrule, is not due to be published until July but there is a possibility that copies will be available to buy at the signing.

Fly along to Dove Spa for special promotions

TO celebrate the grand re-opening of Dove Spa Bromley, customers are being offered some very special promotions.

Until May 31, new and existing customers can enjoy a Hydra facial treatment for just £10. Book any Dove Spa Signature facial treatment after the Hydra and receive a free In My Defence Anti Pollution Serum, worth £30.

Virgin Active members will receive a 25 per cent discount during May. Call 0844 800 2152 or visit www.dovespa.co.uk.

It's a Breese making cash from your junk

A SPRING clear-out could result in extra cash with the help of the new Collectables Manual.

Written by TV presenter, journalist and consultant Jamie Breese, the book uncovers the hidden value in those old toys, phone cards, postcards and ceramics. From Bagpuss to the Beatles, the book helps to identify the gems among the junk.

The Collectables Manual is published by Haynes and is priced at £16.99.

Bring on the barbecue and enjoy the outdoors

ENJOY alfresco dining in the great outdoors during National Barbecue Week.

The annual event runs from bank holiday Monday to Sunday, May 31. With the British public becoming ever more daring with their tastebuds, many are experimenting with more exotic foods than the standard burgers and sausages.

Find inspiration for your barbecue bashes online at www.nationalbbqweek.co.uk. More advice on alfresco living can be found at www.gastro-alfresco.co.uk.

Quench kids' thirst with pure Tropicana juices

CHILDREN can quench their thirst and enjoy the goodness of juice with the new kids range from Tropicana.

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Perfect for lunch boxes, Tropicana Kids! Juice & Water comes in a multi-pack of six 200ml bottles (£2.49).

See www.tropicanakids.co.uk.

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■ BY PAUL MCGURK

"JUST listen," says our guide. "Listen to the peace and quiet."

Our boat has ground to a halt in a semi-prehistoric setting on the surface of the Sapote tributary of the Amazon, a riot of greenery and dark waters all around us.

Then you hear the rustling of trees, the calls of hidden creatures and the buzzing of insects, and realise that this place, a million miles from anywhere, is never, ever quiet.

Welcome to the jungle.

Departing from the jungle city of Iquitos, in Peru, our 60ft MV Delphin riverboat snakes its way along tributaries of the Amazon few people have seen.

Guided by Adonay and Juan-Luis, the

All life carries on up the jungle

sensation of our 20ft skiffs shooting across the brown surface of the river is thrilling enough.

Every conceivable creature is there to be spotted – stripy three-toed sloths, lazy iguanas, white-faced saki monkeys, squirrel monkeys with their post-watershed behaviour and howler monkeys that send out eerie cries.

There are opportunities to catch piranhas with some meat on a stick at the Caro Curahuayte tributary.

Charming by day, the river takes on a different, yet alluring, character after sunset.

Creatures appear in the darkness. A clown tree frog is briefly in my hands before it hops

into the undergrowth, while a hairy, pink-toed tarantula crawls up the limb of a tree not four feet away from my head. It's fair to say that the Amazon is not the place to go if you have issues with beasts and creepy crawlies.

With mosquitos in abundance, you will need to be well stocked with repellent, plus anti-malaria medication and other vaccines.

If all this sounds like roughing it, the contrast could not be sharper with the comforts of life aboard the Delphin.

You can relax on the top deck with a pisco sour – a cocktail made with Peru's national spirit – and in the dining room you can enjoy

first-class gourmet meals, including catfish and giant snails served in the shell.

Your first stop in Peru is likely to be the capital Lima. For an overnight stay, the Miraflores Park Hotel by the sea is one of the best options.

Lima is Peru's gastronomic capital, boasting coastal, Andean and even jungle cuisine. With fishing being a major local industry, seafood markets are the ideal place to find fresh fish.

Lima Cathedral, a study in Gothic grandeur, boasts a chilling trip through the catacombs underneath, with the skulls and bones of generations of people buried in its walkways, even as Sunday Mass goes on above.

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FACT FILE: PERU



Time difference	-Five hours (GMT)
Capital	Lima
Language	Spanish
Population	28.2 million
Currency	£1 = 4.6 Nuevo Sol
Religion	Catholic
Climate	Diverse

Travel details

Paul McGurk travelled with Peru's tourist board PromPeru and travel operator Cox & Kings, which offers a six-night tailor-made Amazon Cruise itinerary combining a four-night cruise on the MV Delphin with two nights in Lima, from £2,775 including flights ex-London and Manchester with KLM via Amsterdam and LAN Peru, B&B (full-board on cruise), transfers and excursions. Add £35 supplement ex-Glasgow. Cox & Kings: 0207 873 5000 and www.coxandkings.co.uk

Destination information: see www.peru.info
Yellow fever, typhoid and hepatitis A vaccines are essential, plus plenty of sunblock. High-water season in the Amazon is December-May.



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YOUR TV REVIEW

■ BY JAMES ALEXANDRE

EUROVISION SONG CONTEST BBC1, Saturday, May 16

THERE are few non-sporting events on television big enough to force a postponement of even the best-laid plans.

In my naivety I'd unwittingly scheduled a night out on Saturday, without reckoning on the strangely alluring power of a Norwegian violinist.

Cupid-faced Alexander Rybak wooed the 100 million-plus audience with his whimsical story-telling charm, smashing Eurovision records in the process.

The annual kitsch fest, now in its 53rd year, has undergone some changes including a supposed end to the mutual backslapping between nations which characterised this competition in recent years.

Of even greater significance, the BBC in their wisdom decided to replace the much-loved irreverent commentary of Terry Wogan, whose musings provided as much entertainment as the performers on stage, with that of another Irish chat show host (albeit with mixed results).

Graham Norton was given the task of filling those voluminous shoes and the size of the occasion seemed at first to overwhelm him.

His initial sarcastic put-downs came across as clumsy attempts to emulate the great Wogan, but the increasingly colourful acts on stage helped him naturally assume the great man's mantle.

One wonderfully-wry observation was about how the Ukraine entry's elaborate set-up, which included exotic Roman centurion dancers, required the singer to re-mortgage her home.

Norton seamlessly quipped: "So, if you are looking for a cheap property in the Ukraine area..."

As for the UK effort, our hopes



TOUGH ACT: Norton took over from old Terry

were pinned firmly to rising starlet Jade Ewen. Joined by Andrew Lloyd Webber on piano, her song *It's My Time* was typical musical grandstanding, a big ballad in the same mould of so many of the impresario's West End shows.

I didn't find it particularly inspiring, but somehow most of Europe's 42 nations dialled up to propel her performance to fifth in the table, the UK's highest finish since 2002.

Disillusioned by our own contribution, I was moved to vote for Turkey's offering, Hadise's *Dum Tek Tek* which hit all the right notes, so much so the rest of the UK awarded them the honorary 'douze' points.

But the ensuing avalanche of support for Norway's new favourite son confirmed why the show still draws in huge numbers.

Despite each country's obvious partiality for their nearest neighbours and the occasional penchant for the odd or quirky, the grinning youngster with his trusty violin managed to capture the heart of a continent.

Having passed the first hurdle, could it be only another 29 years before it's "arise, Sir Graham?"

YOUR WEEK'S HOROSCOPE

BY RUSSELL GRANT



AQUARIUS (Jan 21-Feb 19)

USUALLY you keep a tight control over your emotions, but that may not be the case this week. A difficult relative could make you very angry. You resent their attempts to divert you from a treasured ambition. Keep in mind you can pursue this goal now you are no longer under their wing.

- To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Aquarius** 09067-531762



TAURUS (Apr 21-May 21)

YOU'RE more ambitious than ever so you can't just sit idly by and watch other people steal your thunder. You may have to defy an authority figure if you aim to get noticed and although your boss won't like it much your behaviour will win you the attention you need from people who matter.

- To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Taurus** 09067-531753



LEO (Jul 24-Aug 23)

RESIST the urge to use your social status for personal gain. If you're trying to win somebody's heart, it's better to keep a low profile. Your beloved isn't impressed by flashy gestures; he or she wants to know the real you. Arrange a casual date where the two of you can just talk.

- To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Leo** 09067-531756



SCORPIO (Oct 24-Nov 22)

THERE'S lots of pushing and pulling involved in a close relationship. On one hand, you're delighted by your friend's practical methods. On the other, you don't like having your emotional approach dismissed. There has to be a compromise. Don't lay a guilt trip on a negligent friend.

- To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Scorpio** 09067-531759



PISCES (Feb 20-Mar 20)

IT will be challenging getting your ideas across. At times it feels like people are deliberately twisting your words. Maybe it's because they're threatened by your plans. Instead of trying to win their approval, put your agenda into motion. People will respect you a lot more for it.

- To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Pisces** 09067-531763



GEMINI (May 22-Jun 22)

WORKING behind the scenes has mixed results. On one hand, you can take your rivals by surprise. On the other, you could be branded as deceptive. Don't pretend to be more experienced than you are or you could be exposed. Show respect to someone with extensive experience.

- To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Gemini** 09067-531754



VIRGO (Aug 24-Sep 23)

DEALING with somebody from a different background can be difficult. It's hard to read their body language. When in doubt, ask a direct question and you'll avoid confusion. If your new friend offers to teach you a skill, accept. You will thrive on the intellectual stimulation.

- To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Virgo** 09067-531757



SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23-Dec 21)

YOUR health could be delicate this week, so take it easy. Overindulging in food or drink will slow you down when you have to be efficient. Friends can help you stay on the straight and narrow. Tell them you need to follow a strict diet and stick to a brisk exercise regimen.

- To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Sagittarius** 09067-531760



ARIES (Mar 21-Apr 20)

YOUR financial picture is mixed. Taking on an unorthodox job will bring in plenty of extra cash, but you'll have to restrain yourself from spending it all. Friends have a way of talking you into costly endeavours. Instead of caving in to peer pressure be content with what you have.

- To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Aries** 09067-531752



CANCER (Jun 23-Jul 23)

TAKING charge of a group will bring both pleasure and pain. On the plus side, you'll be able to put your knowledge to good use. However, some members of the team will be jealous of your success. Don't bother trying to win them over. Keep doing the best job you can.

- To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Cancer** 09067-531755



LIBRA (Sep 24-Oct 23)

HOLDING money and the power it gives you over somebody else will result in disaster. If they want to part ways let them leave with the stuff they brought to the union or your reputation as a honest person will be destroyed. If you are the victim of a bad break up, be good to yourself.

- To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Libra** 09067-531758



CAPRICORN (Dec 22-Jan 20)

WHEN dealing with a youngster you need to remember that you're a role model. You can't ask a kid to abide by a moral code that you don't follow. You'll either have to change your ways or re-examine your values. Financial matters could get in the way of a relationship.

- To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Capricorn** 09067-531761

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MEDIUM

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HARD

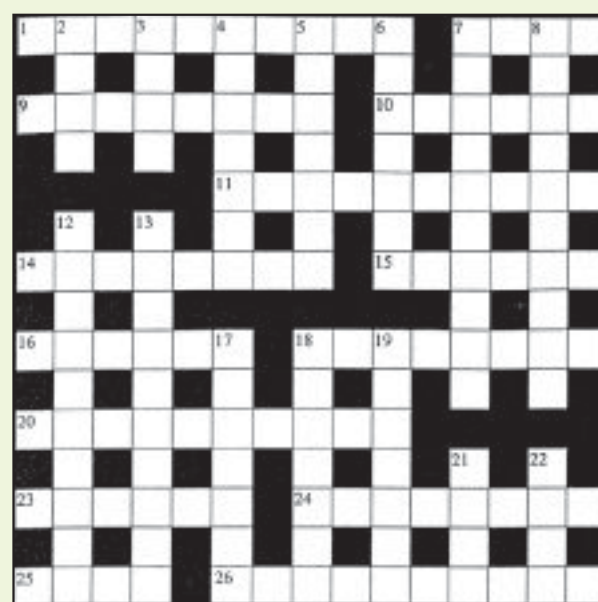
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CRYPTIC CLUES

ACROSS

- 1 But this store does not have a monopoly (6,4)
7 Drive south round sainted Cornish town (4)
9 Pair is entering genuine retribution (8)
10 Drive black aero-engine (6)
11 Head off finally? (10)
14 Relaxed but gloomy (8)
15 Jack, clown stopping short, is very strong man (6)
16 Gang leader strangely urged, having feeling of resentment (6)
18 Slim lady cavorted in a depressing way! (8)
20 Winning – in a game with horse chestnuts, say! (10)
23 Faster sort of air attack (6)
24 Number of starting-places on golf-links, or on the wagon (8)
25 Be including semi-ripe cheese (4)
26 Breathtaking (10)
DOWN
2 In the horsebox encouraged cattle (4)
3 Informer's name on chest (4)
4 Live out classy part remaining (7)
5 Hag coming from chalet, about 50 (7)
6 One exercises in part wall (7)
7 Unimportant abstract (10)
8 Happening to take posh friend finally (10)
12 After teatime get publicity for somewhere for the rest of the night (4-6)
13 Poor Dean with quite a problem (10)
17 Some of the clientele mentioned part (7)
18 Ne'er-do-well on fishing-boat (7)
19 Put forward plan that gets Gus upset (7)
21 Fleece that might be pulled over one's eyes (4)
22 Green cloth? (4)

SCRIBBLE HERE



QUICK CLUES

ACROSS

- 1 Greet (5,5)
7 Rescue (4)
9 Smoked beef (8)
10 Habituated (6)
11 Military power (10)
14 Mb in computing (8)
15 Gambling (6)
16 Greek goddess of wisdom (6)
18 Plant with nodding flowers (8)
20 Evade capture (4,3,3)
23 Nap (6)
24 Gypsy dancing (8)
25 Ego (4)
26 Setting aside (10)

DOWN

- 2 Leg-pull (4)
3 Bird of prey (4)
4 Rumour (7)
5 Moonies (anag.) (7)
6 Lively party (7)
7 Substantial repast (6,4)
8 Camera attachment (10)
12 Plague (10)
13 Mackintosh (10)
17 Attain (7)
18 Cone-bearing tree (7)
19 Ancient Greek musical instrument (7)
21 Yank (4)
22 Religious image (4)

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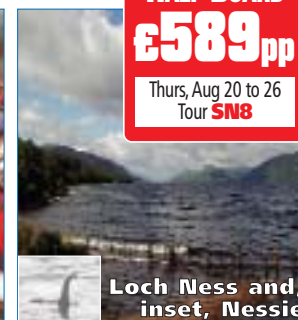
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6	2	4	5	3	1	8	9	7
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MEDIUM

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HARD

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CRYPTIC SOLUTION No87

ACROSS: 1 Bastille Day 9 Nimrod 10 Eulogia 12 Rejoice 14 Torquay 15 Ventilation 16 Ike 17 Net 19 Regrettable 22 Sweater 23 Lambast 24 Afflict 25 Brazil 26 Candlelight. **DOWN:** 2 Abidjan 3 Termini 4 Lad 5 Electric eel 6 Aileron 7 Agouti 8 Mary Celeste 11 Driving seat 13 Exaggerated 18 Tee off 19 Retsina 20 Timpani 21 Bearish. 25 Bye.

QUICK SOLUTION No88

deco 20 Cuffed 21 Pencil 23 Error. Economic 16 Demanded 17 Sigh 19 Art External 7 Tullip 9 Hymn 14 Statement 15 Interlude 3 Gallon 4 Cable 5 Selfless 6 Preceded 27 Lotto. **DOWN:** 1 Belisha 2 Amusement 25 Crème de la crème 26 Assassins 17 Sketched 18 Gala 22 Green 24 little 10 Sartorial 11 Repay 12 Arum 13

Answers to all of this week's quizzes can be found on our website

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PROPERTY NEWS

Call for Government to act on energy saving

THE Federation of Master Builders has called on the Government to act in response to the draft Heat and Energy Saving Strategy consultation.

The aim of the consultation is a long-term plan to cut carbon emissions from both homes and businesses, and ultimately to reduce emissions by 80 per cent by 2050.

It is all part of the Government's growing commitment to reducing carbon emissions – thought to be one of the main factors responsible for the problem of global warming.

But the federation has said the wheels need to be put in motion now, with a delivery plan backed by financial incentives if all of Britain's homes are to be upgraded by 2030.

Brian Berry, director of external affairs, said: "The Government's aim to upgrade all of Britain's homes by 2030 is not going to succeed unless the financial incentives are put in place to create a new market for greener, more energy-efficient homes.

"Householders have still to be convinced about the merits of spending thousands of pounds on energy-efficient improvements with little prospect of seeing a return on their money.

"If the Government is serious about its commitment to upgrade our homes, it needs to introduce some financial incentives, such as cutting VAT to five per cent for home improvements; council tax rebates and/or the introduction of green mortgages."

Agency targets FTBs as market boosters

THE UK's largest online network of estate agents has offered its tips for first-time buyers who are considering taking their crucial first steps on to the property ladder.

Email4property.co.uk believes activity from this end of the market will accelerate over the summer months as improved affordability begins to infiltrate the housing market.

Steve Lees, head of marketing at email4property.co.uk, said: "With property prices at their most affordable for a number of years, now is proving an excellent time for first-time buyers to secure their first home.

"While lenders are taking a much more cautious approach at the moment, there are still some good deals out there for any buyers who are in a position to provide a reasonable deposit."



OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOK: The slump in property values over the coming months may not be as bad as predicted and the price of your home could increase by the end of the year

Lloyds predicts upturn in market by year's end

■ BY NICK AMES

PROPERTY owners have negotiated the worst of the recession as house prices are set to rise again by the end of the year, according to the country's biggest lender.

Optimistic predictions that the market is to bottom out have come from experts at Lloyds, who have said that prices will now fall by just another six per cent before turning the corner.

As a result, by the end of the year, the market will begin to pick up again, with values starting to increase once more.

But other analysts have emphasised the worst is not quite over – and the coming months will not see any quick respite from the slump.

Optimistic

The forecast comes as financial commentators grow more optimistic about the outlook for the UK economy and stock market, with the FTSE 100 now showing a gain for the year.

Lloyds, which has a 30 per cent share of the mortgage market, previously thought house prices would fall 15 per cent this year – or a

drop of about 34 per cent from the August 2007 peak average price of £199,612.

However, the company's analysts now believe the decline is likely to be closer to ten per cent, with prices probably bottoming within months.

As a result, as prices are already down 3.8 per cent this year, according to the Halifax house price index, this means a further fall of just six per cent before the upturn.

Stephen Noakes, of Lloyds, said: "I think we will only see about ten per cent to 12 per cent falls this year.

"For the first time, people are thinking that house prices will increase over the next 12 months."

Other property experts are also giving more encouraging assessments of future market trends.

Ray Boulger, of brokers John Charcol, said he was of the opinion that house prices had only eight per cent left to fall before bottoming in the autumn and then increasing by three per cent by the end of the year.

Lloyds last week slashed the cost of deals for people who want to get on to the property ladder as price falls have slowed.

However, experts warn that there will continue to be falls in the coming months.

Martin Ellis, housing economist at the Halifax, said: "The average UK house price declined by 1.7 per cent in April, slightly less than the 1.9 per cent monthly fall in the previous month.

Affordable

"The house price-to-earnings ratio – a key measure of housing affordability – is at its lowest level since the autumn of 2002 at 4.26.

"Mortgage rate cuts have reduced monthly payments for the average existing borrower by £111 since October 2008, also boosting affordability. Mortgage approvals remain at historically very low levels.

"Rising unemployment, low consumer confidence and the reduced availability of credit are all expected to exert downward pressure on the housing market over the next few months.

"As a result, further house price declines are likely."

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MAIDSTONE £109,950

A two bedroom ground floor apartment with ensuite shower room. There is a fitted kitchen with appliances open plan to the living room. The property is double glazed, no forward chain.

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LOOSE OIEO £185,000

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MAIDSTONE OIEO £185,000

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MAIDSTONE £105,000

A first floor one bedroom retirement apartment located in Maidstone town centre. There is a communal lounge, warden, communal gardens and parking. An internal viewing is recommended.

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WEST MALLING £469,950

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MAIDSTONE £79,950

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MAIDSTONE OIEO £175,000

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MAIDSTONE £199,950

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MAIDSTONE OIEO £159,995

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PUBLIC NOTICE



PROPERTY ADDRESS: 184 South Park Road, MAIDSTONE, KENT ME15 7AJ

We are acting for the mortgagees and have received an offer of £130,500 on the above property. Any interested parties must submit any higher offers in writing to the selling agent before an exchange of contracts takes place.

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MAIDSTONE OIEO £115,000

A two bedroom home on the periphery of the town centre. The cul-de-sac is a retirement complex for the over 60's to retain independent living but have the security of warden assistance.

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MAIDSTONE £119,950

Unique 2 bedroom Grade II Listed home. The accommodation is arranged over 3 floors with modern kitchen and bathroom but does require some work. There are two loft rooms with separate staircases.

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PUBLIC NOTICE



PROPERTY ADDRESS: 34 Waterlow Road, Maidstone, Kent ME14 2TR

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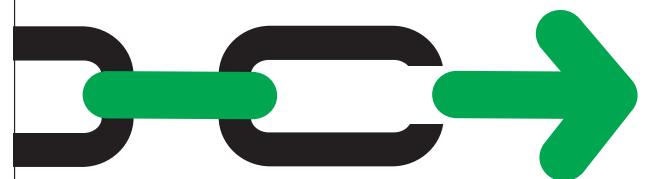


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• Lounge/Dining Room • Fitted Kitchen

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• En-suite To Master Bedroom • Sitting Room / Dining Room

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• Grade Two Listed Cottage
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• With Dressing Rm & En-suite • Downstairs Cloakroom/Wc

MAIDSTONE £232,000



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• EOT Home • 3 Beds • Master with
• En-suite • Downstairs Cloak/WC

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We advise that an offer has been made for the above Property in the sum of £94,000. Any persons wishing to increase on this offer should notify the agents of their best offer prior to exchange of contracts.

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• Conservatory • Kitchen/Dining Room

WEAVERING £295,000



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• Bungalow • 3 Bedrooms • Kitchen
• Dining Room • Utility Room

KINGSWOOD £189,000



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• Semi Detached Home • 3 Bedrooms
• Lounge • Kitchen/Dining Room

LANGLEY £163,000



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• Refurbished • Two Bedrooms
• Lounge • Kitchen/ Dining Room

BEARSTED £147,500



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• Ground Floor 1 Bedroom Retirement Home • Communal Entrance

BEARSTED £260,000



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• L Shaped Lounge • Kitchen/Diner

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• Lounge & Sitting Room • Kitchen/Diner

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• Four Bedrooms

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• Mid Terrace Home • 3 Bedrooms • Sitting
• Dining Room • Views Over A Green

MAIDSTONE £195,000



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• Family Townhouse • 3 Bedrooms • 2
• Reception • Downstairs Cloakroom/Wc

MAIDSTONE £139,995



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• 2 Bedrooms • Sitting/Dining Room
• Modern Fitted Kitchen & Bathroom

MAIDSTONE £339,995



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• Executive Family Home • 4 Bedrooms
• Refurbished • Sitting Room

AYLESFORD £299,995



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• Spacious Bungalow • 4 Bedrooms
• Kitchen/Breakfast Room • Garage

BOUGHTON MONCHELSEA £249,995



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• 4 Double Bedrooms • 2 Bedrooms
• With En-suites • 2 Reception Rooms

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• Semi Rural Location • Detached House • 4 Bedrooms • Modern Kitchen

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Day Three - The Rose Bowl, Southampton - Wednesday, 10th June - 11am.



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Freehold Block for Investment
Guide: £200-230,000



SEVINGTON, ASHFORD
Pair of Derelict Cottages with Potential
Guide: £100-110,000



CANTERBURY
Three Bed Bungalow, Gge & Parking
Guide: £190-200,000



MARGATE
Three Bed House for Investment
Guide: £100-110,000



STURRY
Three Acre Site - Good road frontage
Guide: £200-220,000



NR FAVERSHAM
23 Acres inc. former watercress beds
Guide: £70-75,000



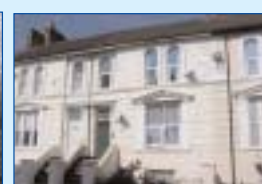
DOVER
Mid Terrace House for Improvement
Guide: £65-70,000



MILSTEAD
Scandinavian Style Property in 8 Acres
Guide: £220-250,000



TYLER HILL, CANTERBURY
Detached Three-Bedroom Cottage
Guide: £120-130,000



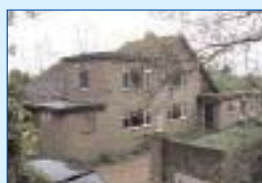
ASHFORD
Freehold Investment Opportunity
Guide: £120-125,000



RAMSGATE
Commercial/Residential Investment
Guide: £350-370,000



CANTERBURY
Two Bedroom City Maisonette
Guide: £85-95,000



LYMINGE, FOLKESTONE
House & Outbuildings in 24 Acres
Guide: £480-500,000



MARGATE
Flat with three balconies & sea views
Guide: £65-70,000



RAMSGATE
Three Bedroom Terraced House
Guide: £80-85,000



CHATHAM
End Terrace House for Improvement
Guide: £100-110,000



GILLINGHAM
Semi-Detached House for Improvement
Guide: £90-95,000



CHATHAM
17 Lock-Up Garages for Investment
Guide: £90-95,000



MAIDSTONE
Village House for Modernisation
Guide: £200-210,000



HOO, ROCHESTER
Semi on Large Plot-Potential for Extension
Guide: £100-110,000



SOUTHBOROUGH
Vacant Extensive Commercial Premises
Guide: £360-370,000



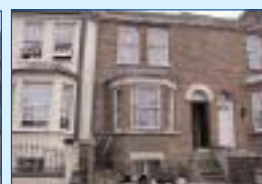
SITTINGBOURNE
Vacant Flat & Ground Rent Investment
Guide: £45-50,000



CHATHAM
6 Garages for Occupation or Investment
Guide: £10-12,000



SITTINGBOURNE
Four Bedroom Semi for Improvement
Guide: £100-110,000



STROOD
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Guide: £55-65,000



NORTHFLEET, GRAVESEND
Substantial Freehold Investment
Guide: £150-160,000



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Two Purpose Built Flats for Investment
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Commercial/Residential with Potential
Guide: £330-350,000



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Land with Potential
Guide: £20-30,000



ORPINGTON
Bungalow for Improvement
Guide: £120-130,000

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Maidstone



Asking Price £75,000

One bedroom flat, lounge, kitchen with integrated appliances and parking.

Maidstone



£119,950

Unique four bedroom house in town centre, no onward chain and viewing via agent. Viewing recommended.

Aylesford



£159,950

Three Bedroom semi detached house in need of refurbishment, good commuter links by both road and rail.

Maidstone



Offers in excess of £160,000

Three bed home has off road parking, lounge, kitchen, cellar currently used as dining room and bathroom.

Larkfield



£180,000

Two bedroom top floor apartment. Lake views, parking and en suite bathroom. Surprisingly spacious.

Maidstone



Offers in excess of £180,000

Three bedroom end of terrace situated within half mile of Mote Park and town centre, available immediately.

Penenden Heath



Offers Over £190,000

Corner plot, available with no onward chain, lounge and dining room, two bedrooms, bathroom, wc and kitchen.

Maidstone



£249,995

Extended 3 bed semi detached home, extended reception space plus extended kitchen. This house must be viewed.

Maidstone



Fixed Price £250,000

Detached bungalow with no onward chain, a viewing is highly recommended as stamp duty is negotiable.

Penenden Heath



£499,995

Detached family home, cul de sac position, executive home is offered for sale. Must be viewed.

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Maidstone Branch



Connells

Maidstone

£159,995



- Mid Terrace 2 Bedroom House
- 2 Allocated Car Parking Spaces
- Kitchen/diner
- Cul De Sac Location

Maidstone

£119,950



- Top Floor 2 Bed Apartment
- Balcony
- Allocated Parking
- Close proximity of the town

Maidstone

£180,000



- 4 Bed 3 Storey Townhouse
- Ensuite to Master Bedroom
- Popular Location
- D. glazing, Central Heating

Maidstone

£179,950



- 3 Bed Modern End of Terrace
- Ensuite to master bedroom
- Downstairs Cloakroom
- NO ONWARD CHAIN

Maidstone

£174,995



- Period terrace home
- Three/Four Bedrooms
- Flexible Accomodation
- Gas central heating

Boughton Monchealsea

£249,995



- Modern 3 bed detached house
- 2 reception rooms
- Master bedroom with ensuite
- Garage and parking

Maidstone

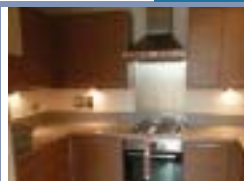
£237,500



- Fantastic 4 Bed Semi Detached
- Corner Plot Location
- Extended Kitchen
- 16" Lounge, Sep. Dining Room

Maidstone

£94,995



- 3rd Floor one bed apartment
- Juliette Balcony
- Modern fitted kitchen
- Double Glazed Windows

Maidstone

£219,995



- Close to Bus links.
- Superb 4 Bedroom Semi
- 2 Reception Rooms
- 80 Foot rear garden

Maidstone

£225,000



- Delightful 3 Bedroom Property
- 14'7 Lounge, sep. Dining Room
- Downstairs Cloakroom
- Garage and Drive with Parking

Maidstone

£274,995



- Beautiful detached property
- 3 beds/ Master with ensuite
- Delightful gardens
- 2 Reception rooms

Sandling Lane

£675,000



- Executive Detached 5 Bedroom
- Set in approx 1 acre
- 3 Reception Rooms
- En suite to Master bedroom

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Bearsted £850 PCM

A fantastic opportunity to rent this delightful bungalow. It features a large lounge/diner, fitted kitchen, 2 double beds and single bed, family bathroom, a large garden, garage & off road parking.



Maidstone £500 PCM

A newly renovated one bed property. It has a Lounge/Diner and Kitchen. Double Bedroom with fitted carpet and Ensuite Shower. Available Now.



Coxheath £550 PCM

A well presented one double bed house. Offers spacious living/dining area, lots of storage, white goods in kitchen, bathroom, good sized garden.



Bearsted £850 PCM

A fantastic opportunity to rent this delightful bungalow. It features a large lounge/diner, fitted kitchen, two double beds & single bed, family bathroom, a large garden, garage & off road parking.

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Maidstone £865 PCM

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Loose £850 PCM

Semi detached house. Newly decorated throughout. Lounge/diner, fitted kitchen, 2 double beds and 1 single bed, bathroom with shower, Garden.



Maidstone £600 PCM

A two bed flat in the town centre on Gabriels hill close to train station and major motorways. It features large lounge, kitchen and bathroom.



Maidstone £1,200 PCM

MRL are pleased to be able to offer this stunning Riverside property. 3 Double Beds all with ensembles, Riverside balcony and Riverside Sun-terrace. Available furnished or unfurnished.

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MOTORS NEWS



Mazda launches frugal new Ford Focus chaser

MAZDA has launched an all-new rival in the hard-fought family hatchback sector.

The latest Mazda3 (from £13,500) echoes the sharp styling of the bigger '6' model and gains new 2.2-litre performance diesel engines of 150PS (148bhp) and 185PS (182bhp) output.

Fuel economy is better by up to 16 per cent and CO2 emissions reduced by 19 per cent. Company car user choosers will like reduced Benefit in Kind liabilities.

The range is again offered in five-door and four-door formats.



Chrysler is marking 25 years in special style

CHRYSLER is celebrating the Grand Voyager's 25th anniversary with a special edition.

Already big on value, the £32,600 GV 'special' comes with extras including leather trimmed seats, dual screen rear DVD entertainment system and 'unconnect' GPS sat nav, Xenon headlamps and 'Bentley' style chrome mesh grille.

But the famous Stow 'n' Go system is standard, allowing the second and third row of seats to fold flat into the floor, offering extra luggage space.



Take the air for free on the sharp-suited Cruze

CHEVROLET is tipped to further boost market share with the forthcoming sharp-suited Cruze saloon, due to replace the ageing Lacetti in July.

The General Motors value brand is also drumming up advance interest by righting a glaring omission from an otherwise generous spec on the £11,545 Cruze 1.6S entry model – air con. Normally a £450 extra, this will be free on any Cruze ordered before August 31 and joins electronic stability control and follow-me-home lighting as major bonuses on this newcomer.



EYE-CATCHER: The MiTo sums up everything that's great about Alfa Romeo, taking in lines echoing that of the stunning Alfa 8C Competizione supercar and superb value for money

Alfa will challenge Mini with its own 'M-word'

MINI is the most fashionable name in motoring right now – especially as we celebrate 50 years since the birth of the original.

But the Mini icon has a formidable new style rival now that Alfa Romeo has uttered its own four-letter M-word.

The MiTo sums up everything great about Italy: the name mixes fashion capital Milano with resurgent motor city Torino, while the design draws the eye despite supermini dimensions and the whole evokes Alfa sporting heritage and tradition. Admittedly, the brand suffered a long flaky patch, but the MiTo says Alfa is back, albeit under ownership of a similarly reborn Fiat group.

After taking in lines echoing that of the stunning Alfa 8C Competizione supercar and a stylish cabin, you quickly realise this is a superb driver's car for the money.

Our top spec Veloce model featured the turbocharged 155bhp 1.4-litre petrol unit (£14,995). It sounds great and delivers 0-62mph in eight seconds towards a maximum 134mph, yet should average well over 40mpg.

ROAD TEST ALFA MITO

BY STEVE LOADER

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Green rating	★★★★★

Such all-round appeal is enhanced by a sector-leading standard-fit package of selectable driver aids/modes under the somewhat cheesy abbreviation DNA – in this case, short for Dynamic, Normal and All-Weather.

'Dynamic' is what Alfa has always strived to stand for: quick, taut and responsive with the engine yelling to let you know it's with you all the way; 'Normal' does what it says on the tin, looking after you in busy traffic when more comfort is required; while 'All-Weather' gets you home in the sort of snowy conditions Kent experienced earlier in the year, by toning down throttle response and keeping you sensible... and on the road.

The MiTo is not the roomiest supermini though, but comes with a maximum five-star NCAP safety rating and generous specifications.

The range opens with an unblown 1.4-litre petrol at £11,795 and the perky diesels begin at £12,245. There is an evocative series of trim levels too; tell your mates you bought the Turismo and they probably won't have clue that you bought the cooking version, Lusso doesn't sound half bad even if it is the halfway house, while Veloce sounds just right for a famous sporting brand. Looks best in red or black though.



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OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT FUEL CONSUMPTION FIGURES (LITRES PER 100KM/MPG) & CO₂ EMISSIONS (G/KM): C4 HATCHBACK RANGE: URBAN 5.7-9.1/49.6-31.0, EXTRA URBAN 3.7-5.1/76.3-55.4, COMBINED 4.4-6.6/64.2-42.8, CO₂ 117-175. C4 PICASSO RANGE: URBAN 6.4-11.8/44.1-23.9, EXTRA URBAN 4.7-6.4/60.1-44.1, COMBINED 5.3-8.4/53.3-33.6, CO₂ 140-197. GRAND C4 PICASSO RANGE: URBAN 6.4-11.8/44.1-23.9, EXTRA URBAN 4.7-6.4/60.1-44.1, COMBINED 5.3-8.4/53.3-33.6, CO₂ 140-197.

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USED CAR ROUND-UP: OUR PICK FROM A KEY SECTOR

AFFORDABLE MPVs

JUST a few years ago, a new breed of van-based budget people carriers suffered from a 'Postman Pat' image. But the recession has brought realism in place of image-conscious consumerism. Many hard-pressed families realise models like those featured here can be far cheaper to run than a specialist people carrier. Small businesses love them too, because these workhorses can switch from a midweek van role to weekend family holdall, with sliding rear doors for easy access. Top-notch diesel options make them reliable and good on fuel too.

FIAT DOBLO



NOT the greatest looking MPV, but the Doblo probably offers more space to the pound than any other. Odd looks disguise surprisingly good handling and comfort, with easy access via two rear sliding doors. Fiat diesel technology makes it attractive too, although it is best to go for the top of the range 103bhp turbodiesel to get anything like decent acceleration with a load – it hits 60mph in 12.6 seconds compared with the entry level 1.2 petrol version's 19 seconds.

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Looks and image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Quality	★★★★★

RENAULT KANGOO



RENAULT invented the MPV thing with the Espacé and then the Scenic, so the French marque was bound to compete in the budget sector. The Kangoo is both spacious and comfortable, with a pliant ride. It is available – at a premium price – with a lively 80bhp diesel, although petrol options are competent too. Rear sliding doors add to the car's huge high roof space efficiency and flexibility and there are 4x4 Trekka (pictured) versions if you need the extra traction.

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Looks and image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Quality	★★★★★

PEUGEOT PARTNER COMBI/CITROEN BERLINGO MULTISPACE



WE cheated on numbers this week, but these two models are virtually identical clones even if the Citroën (pictured) is more common due to keener prices and higher sales when new. Probably the most refined if not the most spacious models in this class, most versions are pleasant to drive and ride in though the legendary power and refinement of their PSA diesels will most tempt growing families, dog lovers or people needing to load up for a sporty lifestyle.

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Looks and image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
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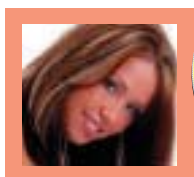
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WOMEN seeking men

SWEET DEBS

Hopeful, happy, shy girl, 22, loves all the normal stuff about life, searching for a mature guy, 24-30, for loving friendship and happiness. Box 880373

SINGLE DADS WELCOME

Lovely single mum, 23, cuddly and curvy, 5ft6, blonde and blue-eyed, like a drink, animals, reading, cinema, looking for honest, trustworthy and caring male. Box 451249

MATCH OF THE DAY!

Fun-to-be-with, blonde female, 25, 5ft2, a woman who loves football! Enjoys going out and staying in, looking for a like-minded man, to be her soulmate. Box 446494

NOT YOUR BROWN-EYED GIRL, BUT...

Blue eyed brunette, 27, 5ft1, loves films, walking, darts, pool, singing, me time! Looking for honest guy with GSOH, for friendship and more? Box 880105

ME AND YOU

Medium build girl, 28, brown hair, green eyes, seeking honest guy who looks after number one, for lasting relationship. Box 451834

GETTING TO KNOW YOU...

Sociable girl, 28, loves pubs, social drinks, meeting new people & more, seeks similar male, 58-62, for a lasting relationship. Box 448756

GIVE AND TAKE IN LOVE

Loving loyal female, 30, blue eyes, brown hair, seeking LTR with male 30-35, 6ft+, no baggage, in the Maidstone area. Box 448471

SEEKING MR DARCY

Warm, kind and sincere woman, 31, lots of love and loyalty for the right person, seeking an honest genuine man with a good heart. Box 451004

HAPPY SHOPPER!

Easysgoing female, 32, enjoys shopping, football, eating out, cosy night in, WLTm loving, caring white male, 35-47, for long-term, loving relationship. No time-wasters. Box 444214

STACEY LOOKING FOR HER GAVIN

Slim, blue-eyed beauty, 31, Tunbridge Wells, likes walking, very genuine. Wanting someone to cuddle up with at night and have lots of laughs with. Box 881494

CUDDLY FEMALE

32, 5ft9, brown hair, curvy figure, enjoys having fun and a laugh and WLTm nice, kind gent. Box 439402

HORSES FOR COURSES...

Caring, loving, affectionate female, 32, blonde, likes walking, horse riding, animals, seeks affectionate male, 30-40, for lasting, loving relationship. Box 384013

FIIT FOR FUN

Petite, dark-haired girl, 33, 5ft, fit, loves badminton, cinema and more, searching for an active man, with heart and soul. Box 881047

SOUND GOOD?

Hello I'm 35, kind, caring and non-smoking, enjoys cooking, cinema, music, dining in and out, looking for that special someone to enjoy a relationship with. Box 447595

LIVING IT

Fair-haired female, 35, 5ft, loves the gym, pubs, nights out and fine company, searching for fun bloke, for life, love and laughter. Box 881011

HISTORIC MEETING?

Mum of three, 36, long mousey hair, blue eyes, interested in historical places, music, eating out, seeks kind, caring, genuine male 35-40, non-smoker, for LTR. Box 440893

LOOKING FOR A LOVING CHAP

Ashford-based woman looking for an honest, friendly, caring and loving man. I have two kids and enjoy the usual things in life. Box 446895

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE

Good looking woman, 37, 5ft2, brown hair/eyes, 2 kids. Looking for new friends and hopefully someone special. Box 446039

ON THE LOOKOUT FOR LOVE

37yr old female, 2 kids, slim, brown hair and eyes, 5ft2, looking for a caring, loving, honest and trusting male to be my someone special. Box 446552

GALLOP AHEAD!

Maidstone-based woman, 36, 5ft5, slim, blue eyes. I'm caring, honest and have 4 children. I enjoy drives and horse riding and WLTm honest, reliable man. Box 451311

PERHAPS PERHAPS

Fun, bubbly, outgoing blonde, late 30s, down-to-earth, with GSOH, searching for tall, genuine fella, for fun, friendship and more? Box 451385

WHERE LOVE TAKES US

Attractive woman with a great personality to go with, looking to meet a fit, tall, well-built black male, 35-55, for fun times and hopefully romance. Box 450650

A HEART FULL OF LOVE

I'm looking 41yr old mixed race female, likes cinema, walks, eating out, bowling, WLTm a genuine white male with gosh for a fun filled friendship/relationship. Box 450890

CHARM ME

Tall, blonde Russian girl, 42, from St Leonards, searching for single and sincere man, for friendship and more. Box 451019

ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE

Hello, I'm Nikki, 41yr young, 5ft1, enjoys dining out, cinema and dancing, seeking a male for friendship, possible romance and fun times. Box 447796

PROFESSIONAL

Fun bubbly sexy black female, 42, outgoing, positive, fun-loving, seeks charming male to have fun and enjoy life with. Box 451744

ACTIVE TYPE

Lively, energetic and fun loving mum, 42, I'm 5ft10, petite, pretty, blonde/brown hair/hazel eyes. WLTm mixed race/black gent, to share good times with. Box 451819

COSY TIMES TOGETHER

Fun-loving female, 42, looking for someone who can make me laugh and enjoys country walks, films, travelling and a nice evening cuddled up. Box 881545

A WARM HEART AND GSOH

Lovely bubbly mum, 43, 5ft6, green eyes, dark hair, medium build, loves salsa dancing, new things, bowling, quiet nights in... Looking for companionship and more. Box 880090

MEET A BOTTLED HEART

Single mum, 37, fun-loving, been hurt in past, looking for nice, genuine guy for hopeful happiness - no time wasters! Box 908053

SEIZE THE DAY

Loving female, 36, 5ft4, brown hair, green eyes, likes socialising, staying in, seeks genuine male for friendship and more. Box 428666

BLONDE AMBITION

Bubbly, cuddly, blonde single mum, 39, 5ft6, likes cars, reading, pubs, cosy nights in, having a laugh, looking for right male for LTR. Box 905614

CUTE AS CAN BE

Cute, single mum of 4, 38yrs old, Kent-based, into most things, looking for friendship or possibly romance. Box 897993

ENTHUSIASM ENCOURAGED!

Lovely pretty big-busted lady, 39, medium build, 5ft5, lots of energy! likes the gym, reading, new experiences! seeking a nice man for potential exciting relationship! Box 446724

JOINED AT THE HIP

Sociable petite girl with great SOH, 40, blonde, sociable, love football! Looking for fun guy with great SOH for inseparable partnership. Box 880434

TIME TO LIVE AGAIN

Lovely 40yr old mum, average build, brown hair, blue eyes, 5ft2, bubbly and GSOH... would like friendship and maybe more with the right man. Box 880149

A NICE BOTTLE OF WINE

Lovely, glossy brunette, 39yr old, petite, bubbly and loving, enjoys theatre, music and eating out, WLTm a professional, loving and tactile male for a relationship. Box 442551

NO TIES

Lonely, bored, professional Tunbridge Wells Asian lady, 40, WLTm slim, single, solvent, professional white male 40-50 for company, fun, love and laughter. Box 443573

BETWEEN US

Asian lady, 41, single, no ties, out going, fun loving, professional, looking for a white male, genuine, professional and solvent. Box 451900

A FAIRY TALE ENDING

Easy-going blonde animal lover, 41, easy-going and tactile, enjoys eating out, cinema and pubs, looking for a loyal, caring and funny man, 35-45. Box 451079

FANCY A DRINK?

Hi I'm Judith, 40, small, blonde hair, blue eyes, love the sea and water-sports, cinema, animals, WLTm fun-loving guy for friendship and see what happens. Box 448107

Attractive woman with a great personality to go with, looking to meet a fit, tall, well-built black male, 35-55, for fun times and hopefully romance. Box 450650

I'm looking 41yr old mixed race female, likes cinema, walks, eating out, bowling, WLTm a genuine white male with gosh for a fun filled friendship/relationship. Box 450890

Tall, blonde Russian girl, 42, from St Leonards, searching for single and sincere man, for friendship and more. Box 451019

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Cute, single mum of 4, 38yrs old, Kent-based, into most things, looking for friendship or possibly romance. Box 897993

Lovely pretty big-busted lady, 39, medium build, 5ft5, lots of energy! likes the gym, reading, new experiences! seeking a nice man for potential exciting relationship! Box 446724

LET'S CLICK

WLTm a nice guy with a similar nature, I'm an outgoing woman, 42, with brown hair and green eyes. Tell me about you! Box 446847

SWING THIS WAY

Sweetest girl, 43, 5ft2, brown hair/eyes, nurse, searching for active man, for pubs, clubs and good times. Box 451028

ALONG THE SHORE

Recently divorced woman, 43, 5ft3, slim, hard-working, fun-loving, likes life, looking for a really nice and trustworthy guy for a relationship. Box 451469

LIVE LIFE TO THE FULL

Good-looking brunette from Kent, 43, 5ft10, likes bowling, eating in/out etc. Looking for a good-looking guy, 35-45, with gosh for friendship/relationship. Box 450348

LOOKING FOR LTR

Single mum, petite, 44, brown hair/eyes, looking to share my life with a nice man, a Russian man would be great! I like cinema, pubs, music. Box 451373

TLC ON OFFER FOR THE RIGHT PERSON!

Blonde, blue eyed woman, 44, fun-loving, looking for Mr Right. I love going out, nights in, movies, walking, local gigs. WLTm the right man for TLC. Box 880280

THIS STATE OF INDEPENDENCE

Hard-working female, 41, 5'4", bubbly, independent woman, love to laugh, socialising with friends, looking for independent man who values TLC. Box 441156

A FINE ROMANCE

Pleasant female, 43, medium/large build, blue/green eyes, grown up children, beach walks, relaxing, reading, wiring, seeks sincere male with GSOH, for LTR. Box 429071

COME ON DOWN!

Honest, bubbly female 45, long hair, slim, enjoys walking, cinema, socialising; seeks honest, friendly chap for friendship leading to more. Box 882693

COULD IT BE YOU?

Hi I'm 44, slim, 5ft8, a redhead, love film dating, socialising, looking for friendship initially and hopefully more later on. Box 889800

JOURNEY TOGETHER

Coy, shy, cheeky, loving black lady, 45, enjoys the sunshine, holidays, drinks, films and music, looking for a man to complete me as I will him. Box 451721

LOVING IT LARGE

Spiritual 44yr old female, enjoy gardening, cooking and walks on the beach, WLTm a warm, loving and caring male for friendship, maybe a LTR. Box 444803

ARE YOU THE ONE FOR ME?

Caring, cute female, 46, petite, likes socialising, dancing, travelling, good food, seeking intelligent, loyal man 42-52 for love and TLC. Box 444366

SOUND GOOD?

Hi I'm Lynne 46, 5ft4, dark hair/eyes, love reading/writing, going out, astrology, cars; seeking honest, caring, outgoing guy to enjoy music, fun, friendship and more! Box 449186

SHARE LIFE WITH

Attractive retired lady, 63, loves swimming and cycling, cinema, eating out... seeks company with a great SOH, young-minded, to enjoy anything that happens. Box 451579

MAYBE YOU'RE THE ONE?

Hi I'm Mandy, chocolate brown hair, blue eyes, 48, seeking human male (preferably) for nights out, socialising, clubbing, meals, lots of laughs and much more. Box 437489

JUST IMAGINE

Petite, brunette, bubbly, friendly, easygoing single mum, 49, enjoys cinema, eating out, socialising, most things, WLTm genuine male, to see where life takes us! Box 893562

BE MY GUY

Young 50s lady, slim, 5ft4, fair hair, a smoker, loves music, going out, cooking, gardening, seeking similar loving, caring, honest male. Box 449288

HERE AND NOW

Outgoing lady, 50, enjoys walks along the beach, nights out and in with a quiet bottle of wine, seeks man to love forever. Box 46924

CARING & PROFESSIONAL

Female 49, 5ft4, long hair, slim, likes eating out, the beach, travel, seeks a friendly chap, 48-55. Box 417100

OPENNESS AND HONESTY

I'm 52, curvy, lively, intelligent with sharp SOH, enjoy conversation, live music, eating out and cinema... looking for someone comfortable in his own skin. Box 873785

COMPANIONSHIP, LAUGHTER, MORE

Curvy & cuddly, outgoing, friendly, honest female, 53, 5ft7, larger build, fair hair, likes socialising, country walks, theatre, cinema, music, swimming, WLTm similar loving male. Box 443642

CUDDLY BUNDLE OF JOY

Loving caring woman, 54, honest, shy, likes gardening, long walks and more, looking for a fun-loving, passionate tactile man for nights out and more. Box 451967

DO YOU HAVE THE BRAINS & THE LOOKS?

Professional, attractive female, 54, enjoys the countryside, gardening, keeping fit, reading and live music, looking to meet an attractive and intelligent man for a relationship. Box 448863

LET'S SEE WHAT HAPPENS!

Smart petite lady, 56, 5ft4, tall, blonde hair, green eyes, likes restaurants, theatre, cinema, travel abroad; seeking happy guy with similar interests. Box 448795

IN STITCHES!

Kind lady in my 50's, blonde hair/hazel eyes, curvy build. I like cinema/theatre, walking, reading, cooking, gardening, sewing, meals out. WLTm similar gent. Maidstone. Box 451889

WALKS ALONG THE COAST

Honest & sincere female, 58, tall, GSOH, loves country pubs, coasts, cinema, seeking a man who's a match for me with GSOH for relationship. Box 441622

HAPPY AS ME

Fun-to-be with, happy, contented lady, 60, 5ft4, I enjoy theatre, dining out and having friends round for a meal, gardening and pets. Box 882812

SO SOMEONE TO SHARE LIFE WITH

Attractive retired lady, 63, loves swimming and cycling, cinema, eating out... seeks company with a great SOH, young-minded, to enjoy anything that happens. Box 451579

EVERYTHING I DO

Lee, driver, 36yr old, 6ft3, dark hair, like pubs, clubs, wine bars, places of interest, sports and reading, WLTm a female with a great personality and aware of others people's feelings, with morals/standards. Aquarian. Seeking similar loving lady. Box 879755

GET ME OUTTA HERE!

Loyal, trustworthy, honest family man, 37, independent, stocky, 5'5", non-smoker, VCSOH, thoughtful and aware of others people's feelings, with morals/standards. Aquarian. Seeking similar loving lady. Box 879755

TRUSTWORTHY

Margate man, 37, 6ft3, dark hair, nice big build. I work in residential care which I love. I'm down-to-earth, kind, tactile, with a GSOH. Box 423437

FULL MARKS

Hi I'm Andrew, 38, 6ft3, dark hair, blue eyes, hardworking guy, friendly, tactile & outgoing, likes playing life, WLTm easygoing female for friendship/relationship. Box 443488

NIGHT OUT NIGHT IN?

Easysgoing male, 40, likes most things in life, seeks slim white female 21-45 for company, friendship and more. Box 451889

FRIENDS FIRST

Caring, understanding chap, 40, 5ft7, blue eyes/blond hair, slim/average build, I'm easygoing and relaxed and like like travel, music, film, restaurants, theatre, days out, badminton. Box 451361

DO YOU FEEL THE SAME?

Hi ya, I'm Ian, 40, 5ft10, medium build, likes a quiet life style, looking for someone who can love/accept me for who I am. Box 450283

ETERNAL FLAME

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Abbey Court School "WE GROW PEOPLE"

Abbey Court School, a 'special' school and a 'special' place to work.
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This School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Any offer of appointment for post is subject to a satisfactory Criminal Record Bureau Disclosure.

For an application pack, please write to/telephone (stating the role for which you are applying):
Mrs Linda Taylor, Abbey Court School, Rede Court Road, Strood, Kent ME2 3SP
(01634 338224)

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Five Acre Wood School is looking for

MIDDAY MEAL SUPERVISORS

to join our friendly school located on
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This job will be subject to satisfactory references and
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Please contact the school for an application pack by
25th May.

Closing date will be Wednesday 3rd June.
Interviews will be held on Wednesday 10th June.
Five Acre Wood and all its personnel are committed
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Science

TEACHER OF MATHEMATICS

Maternity Cover - September 2009

We are looking for a well-qualified and enthusiastic Teacher of Mathematics to join a highly successful Faculty. The person appointed would be required to teach up to A' Level. Maths is a very popular option with students and a high proportion go on to study a Mathematical course in Higher Education.

The person appointed will receive high quality mentoring and support. The Faculty enjoys excellent facilities and equipment.

We have been a Specialist Science College since September 2004; this has led to a broad range of innovative practice across the school and we are looking to develop cross-curricular projects involving Mathematics.

The School has a high profile for achievement locally and nationally and prides itself on a strong record of internal professional development including a full induction in the Summer term.

The School is also an Investor in People and an Investor in Careers.

Application forms and further details are available from the Headteacher's Personal Assistant, Mrs M Tong Ralphs. Completed forms should be returned by post, fax or email for the attention of

Mrs E Wilson, Headteacher no later than

Thursday 21st May 2009

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.



Have you ever considered working in Kent? Known as the garden of England for good reason, with its beautiful, historic and varied landscapes, idyllic villages and diverse towns, Kent has a lot to offer. On the doorstep of mainland Europe you are only 45 minutes away from enjoying a coffee and croissant in France, or of course popping into London to catch a show!

With over 600 years of public rights of way, Kent County Council manages the largest network in the country. It also has an excellent national reputation in service delivery and forward thinking, dynamic new initiatives.

Public Rights of Way Officer (Enforcement)

£20,262 - £30,259 (Salary dependent on experience and progression through the Career Grade is based on the fulfilment of required competencies)
Initially on a two year fixed term contract
Maidstone

Joining our Public Rights of Way team, you will have considerable proven experience of Public Rights of Way or enforcement along with the ability to apply that experience in a pragmatic way to a range of challenging situations. You will be able to investigate reported breaches, prepare case papers and present evidence in Court to the highest standard; and be able to develop similar skills in these around you.

Communicating the requirements of the law effectively to a diverse range of groups with the intention of reducing the number of offences being reported is also required.

With your excellent organisation and communication skills, you will juggle numerous competing priorities and adapt readily to the use of new technology.

You will be a team player with either considerable proven experience of working within PROW or enforcement or be educated to HND or degree level in a related subject. Ref: ER/09/0040



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For more information on the posts above call Graham Rusing on 0202 656995.

To apply, visit www.kent.gov.uk/jobs Alternatively, please email recruitment.line@kent.gov.uk or call 0845 8247 900. Please quote the appropriate reference number

Closing date: Midday, 4th June 2009.

Public Rights of Way Officer (Asset Management Delivery):

Starting salary £20,262
1 year fixed term appointment with possible extension subject to funding
West Malling

The Countryside Access Service is looking for a new officer to join them to deliver capital maintenance programmes across the county. A substantial proportion of the network sits within the Kent Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

You will be joining a busy West Kent PROW Team, and will prepare and supervise programmes of capital works. Working closely with landowners, local councils and other agencies to secure all necessary consents and permissions, the post carries a high-volume workload so you will need to be able to juggle numerous competing priorities and adapt readily to the use of new technology.

A team player, and competent to NVQ3 level in civil engineering/contract management/estate management, you will be able to demonstrate the same level of competency in a similar related area. The post also requires a high level of motivation, a good knowledge of rights of way law and practice and excellent organisational and communication skills. Ref: ER/09/0045



www.kent.gov.uk/jobs

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We are looking for an organised, well presented team player with strong communication skills to support our fast paced business development team. You will be highly conscientious and motivated with a 'can do' attitude. Experience in telemarketing and lead generation is essential.

Please send your CV and salary required to Becky Lander at Adams Creative. becky@adamscreative.co.uk

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We are looking for an experienced PR professional with excellent writing and client-facing skills, able to work to tight deadlines as well as having great organisational abilities and bundles of enthusiasm and creativity. Some experience in event management would be an asset.

Please send your CV and salary required to Becky Lander at Adams Creative. becky@adamscreative.co.uk

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MidKent College is moving into an exciting phase in the history of the College with the relocation from the Horsted and City Way campuses to a stunning new £86m new build located at Lower Lines, Chatham in September this year. Combining this move with the recent award of the Public Private Partnership contract for the Royal School of Military Engineering at Brompton Barracks and the planned development of the existing Maidstone campus, it is a hectic time for the College. MidKent College now has an annual turnover of £45m, a staff of over 1,000 and trains around 12,000 students and 3,000 soldiers each year.

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Interested: Please forward your CV to ken.pullan@midkent.ac.uk or call him on 07725 128661 (after 12th May) for an informal discussion.

A full Job Description/Person Specification and application can be seen at www.midkent.ac.uk

Closing Date: 25th May 2009



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The College is committed to Equal Opportunities and to selection on merit. It welcomes applications from all sections of society. We particularly welcome and encourage applications from under represented groups including black, minority ethnic and disabled people.

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Please forward completed applications to ken.pullan@midkent.ac.uk and/or call Ken Pullan on 07725 128661 for an informal discussion on any of these positions.

Closing date: 1st June 2009

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A.E.R. (KENT) LIMITED

In accordance with Rule 4.106 of the Insolvency Act and Rules 1986, I, Martin C Armstrong FCA FABRP MPA, via of Turpin Barker Armstrong, Allen House 1 Westmead Road Sutton Surrey, give notice that on 06/05/2009 I was appointed Liquidator of A.E.R. (Kent) Limited by resolutions of members and creditors. Notice is hereby given that the creditors of the above named company, which is being voluntarily wound up, are required, on or before 05/06/2009 to send in their full Christian and surnames, their addresses and descriptions, full particulars of their debts or claims, and the names and addresses of their Solicitors (if any), to the undersigned Martin C Armstrong FCA FABRP MPA MSA of Allen House 1 Westmead Road Sutton Surrey, the Liquidator of the said company, and, if so required by notice in writing from the said Liquidator, are, personally or by their Solicitors, to come in and prove their debts or claims at such time and place as shall be specified in such notice, or in default thereof they will be excluded from the benefit of any distribution. Dated 06/05/2009
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CRICKET

BY DAVID PRITCHARD

Kent League Division One

The Mote CC - 1st XI
Canterbury CC - 1st XI

THE Mote 1st XI remain top of Division One despite missing out on a deserved victory against Canterbury 1st XI.

Batting first after winning the toss, the Maidstone side racked up 213 for 5 from their 50 overs. Canterbury struggled in reply and were forced to dig in for a draw long before the end of their innings.

To The Mote's frustration the overs ran out with the home side on 146 for 9, one wicket from defeat.

Vulnerable

The club's 2nd XI fared better, beating Bromley 2nd XI by eight runs.

The Mote's total of 167 looked vulnerable, but the home side also found batting difficult and lost their final wicket agonisingly short of victory.

The Mote's 3rd XI were demolished by eight wickets in a one-sided game with Old Williamsonsians.

Phil Patterson struck twice to leave the home side on 2 for 2 and it barely got better as The Mote were bowled out for 87. David Bage was the pick of the attack, taking 4 for 27.

Luke Butcher's unbeaten 60 was decisive as the visitors got home in the 25th over.

The Mote's superiority not enough to beat City



FRUSTRATION: Despite being the better side, The Mote (batting) had to settle for a draw against Canterbury which kept them top of the table

SCOREBOARD

The Mote 3rd XI

	Runs
Simon Warley ct Fisher b Patterson	0
Peter Bowles ct Pentecost b Patterson	14
Mark Bristow ct Meyers b Patterson	0
Lawrence Freeborn b Bage	41
Jonathan Crowhurst ct Child b Bage	19
Paul Merwood ct Pentecost b Bage	4
Nicholas Daking ct Buckle b Fisher	0
James Bowles ct Pentecost b Fisher	0
Nathan Waite b Bage	0
Paul Usher b Butcher	1
James Rowe not out	0

Extras (2b 2lb 4w) 8
Total (all out, 36.2 overs) 87

Bowlers	0	M	R	W
Phil Patterson	9	3	29	3
David Child	3	0	16	0
David Bage	12	4	27	4
Alex Fisher	9	5	10	2
Luke Butcher	2.2	1	1	1

Old Williamsonsians 1st XI

	Runs
Luke Butcher not out	60
Daniel Buckle ct Bowles b Rowe	1
David Child b Waite	8
Jonathan Wright not out	16
Jonathan Child did not bat	
Sean Holbrook did not bat	
Peter Meyers did not bat	
James Pentecost did not bat	
Alex Fisher did not bat	
David Bage did not bat	
Phil Patterson did not bat	

Bowlers	0	M	R	W
Paul Usher	8	1	23	0
James Rowe	6	4	13	1
Nicholas Daking	5.5	0	23	1
Nathan Waite	3	0	23	1
Peter Bowles	1	0	4	0

LOCAL CRICKET ROUND-UP

KENT LEAGUE DIVISION FOUR

Addington Village 1st XI v Sidcup 1st XI

A LAST-wicket partnership denied Addington Village victory against Sidcup at the weekend.

After having been inserted, the villagers scored 211 for 7 with Neil Scott (56) and Mat Bruton (44 not out) keeping the innings together and ensuring they used all 50 overs.

Bruton then starred with the ball, claiming figures of 4 for 29 as Sidcup struggled, but Addington couldn't take the final wicket that would have seen them claim victory, and had to settle for a winning draw.

Addington Village

	Runs
Mark Rimmer	33
James Tooze	17
Will Jeffery	18
Neil Scott	56
Ben Buet	9
Duncan Brown	19
Mat Bruton	44
Ross McDermott	0
Adam Crowley	7
Joe Pigott	0
Dan Walton	0
Extras	2
Total	211

Bowlers	0	M	R	W
Thomas Beament	11	1	32	1
Dan Dark	3	0	15	0
Scott Noble	8	2	19	1
Norman Puckerin	6	0	23	1
Faisal Zaman	12	1	48	3
Phil Robinson	3	0	17	0
Kevin Mockler	7	1	52	1

Sidcup

	Runs
Peter Stevenson	13
Mat Kilbey	27
Phil Robinson	20
Norman Puckerin	37
Seetharam Krishnamurthy	12
Kevin Mockler	1
Tim Cook	7
Dan Dark	17
Scott Noble	7
Thomas Beament	6
Faisal Zaman	4
Extras	25
Total	176

Bowlers	0	M	R	W
Ross McDermott	5	1	24	0
Joe Pigott	6	1	19	0
Dan Walton	5	0	27	1
Mat Bruton	10	3	29	4
Neil Scott	8	4	14	0
Adam Crowley	4	0	15	1
Duncan Brown	11	2	29	2
Ben Buet	1	0	1	1

KENT LEAGUE DIVISION FIVE

Tunbridge Wells 3rd XI v Offham 1st XI

BEN Gittings came within two runs of scoring a century as Offham secured a convincing 189-run victory.

Gittings finished unbeaten on 98 and was one of three players, who notched up half-centuries as Offham raced away to 287 for 6 after 50 overs. Tunbridge Wells needed an inspired second innings if they were to avoid defeat.

Offham's impressive bowling attack ended Tunbridge's hopes early on, as they were bowled out for just 98 after 26 overs. Simon Hallbrook was the pick of the bowlers finishing with figures of 4 for 19.

Offham

	Runs
Graham Razez	0
Tom Gittings	66
Leonard Watt	52
Ben Gittings	98
Nathan Faulkes	18
Martin Coff	14
Lawrence Bell	28
Mervyn Brooker	0
Daniel Blakeburn	0
Andy Cox	0
Simon Hallbrook	0

Extras (4b 2lb 3w 2nb) 11
Total (6 wickets, 50 overs) 287

Bowlers	0	M	R	W
Mark Thompson	15	0	63	3
Nick Tunnell	14	1	87	0
Percy Watts	7	0	48	1
Ben Allatt	14	0	83	2

Tunbridge Wells

	Runs
Greg Bringer	1
Callum Wood	24
Chris Williams	6
Paul Hammond	1
Ben Allatt	15
David Pinkstone	17
Makarand Malandkar	18
Nick Tunnell	0
Mark Thompson	0
Peter Gould	0
Percy Watts	4

Extras (1b 1lb 1w) 3
Total (all out, 26.2 overs) 98

Bowlers	0	M	R	W
Leonard Watt	8	2	21	2
Daniel Blakeburn	7	1	31	2
Graham Razez	6	1	26	2
Simon Hallbrook	5.2	2	19	4

KENT FEEDER LEAGUE WEST 1B

Lamorby Park 1st XI v Leybourne 1st XI

A PRODUCTIVE batting display from Lamorby Park condemned Leybourne to a heavy six-wicket away defeat.

Leybourne batted first and set a respectable total of 146 all out, with Tom Smith top scoring with a knock of 36.

However, the total proved to be in easy reach for Lamorby Park as Leybourne's bowlers struggled to find wickets. Praveen Chinthala's 77 and Lloyd Barnett's 37 put the home side within touching distance of victory. James Barge and Joginder Singh hit the winning runs.

Leybourne

	Runs
Matthew Simmons	14
David Lock	23
Daniel Bowman	33
David Cahalin	0
Tom Smith	36
Darren Davies	5
Matthew Webb	9
John Smith	3
Alex Rose	8
Tom Bray	5
Richard Webb	0

Extras (8w 2nb) 10
Total (all out, 45.2 overs) 146

Bowlers	0	M	R	W
Rob Murray	10	1	37	2
James Barge	8	3	9	0
Praveen Chinthala	5	0	10	0
Des Hubert	6	0	26	1
Balshish Bhatia	6	0	28	2
Joginder Singh	10.2	1	27	5

Lamorby Park

	Runs
Praveen Chinthala	77
Tim Morgan	0
Lloyd Barnett	37
Andy Martin	10
James Barge	9
Joginder Singh	5
Rob Murray	0
Des Hubert	0
Balshish Bhatia	0
Maurice Rifat	0

Extras (3b 3lb 5w 1nb) 12
Total (4 wickets, 44.1 overs) 150

Bowlers	0	M	R	W
Matthew Webb	12	2	42	0
Tom Bray	7.1	0	28	2
Alex Rose	12	1	41	2
David Lock	2	1	8	0
Richard Webb	7	3	10	0
Daniel Bowman	4	0	15	0

KENT FEEDER LEAGUE EAST 2B

Sheppey CC 2nd XI v The Mote CC 4th XI

A SUPERB innings from Richard Feltham proved the difference as The Mote 4th XI beat Sheppey 2nd XI by three wickets.

Chris Feltham did the damage in the Sheppey innings, taking five wickets as the home side were bowled out for 156.

The Mote's reply got off to a shaky start as they lost three early wickets, but Richard Feltham guided them towards victory before he was out seven runs short of a century.

Sheppey

	Runs
Steve Woodford	21
Daryll Philo	0
Alex Patt	2
Jason Crofskey	17
Naveed Takir	39
Jamie Conrady	11
Ashley Hayward	6
Kevin Bronger	29
Elliot McEntire	8
Oliver Dewey	1
Kevin Cunningham	4

Extras (9b 6w 3nb) 18
Total (all out, 41 overs) 156

Bowlers	0	M	R	W
Mushi Chowdrury	5	0	12	1
David Damen	12	4	27	3
Matt Britz	10	0	31	1
Chris Feltham	11	0	53	5
Lewis Bone	3	0	24	0

The Mote

	Runs
Robert O'Brien	2
Richard Feltham	93
Nick Waite	9
Matt Britz	1
Nigel Mullarkey	20
Adam Crowhurst	5
Nick Mills	0
Mushi Chowdrury	1
Lewis Bone	0
Chris Feltham	0
David Damen	0

Extras (5b 2lb 19w) 26
Total (7 wickets, 44.1 overs) 157

Bowlers	0	M	R	W
Jamie Conrady	10.1	0	38	4
Kevin Cunningham	12	6	22	1
Naveed Takir	12	0	43	1
Ashley Hayward	10	0	47	1

Mercer on course for Isle of Man TT debut



EAGER: Steve Mercer cannot wait to make his Isle of Man TT debut

STEVE Mercer admitted he is already suffering from sleepless nights with just a week remaining before his debut at the Isle of Man TT.

The Maidstone-born superbike rider is set to tackle the notorious 37-mile Isle of Man TT course for the first time, as part of a three-year campaign to try and win the event.

The 26-year-old former British Superbike rider is happy with his progress after a couple of trips to the TT course, but admits learning the course has been a bigger challenge than he had previously thought.

He said: "Preparations have been really good so far. I have made a couple of trips to the island in the last month to

MOTORSPORT

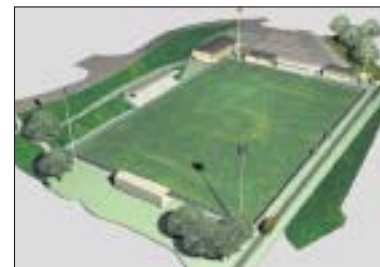
learn the circuit and ride it for the first time on a bike. Learning the circuit is a tough challenge.

"I think there are 256 corners on one lap of the track. It is a place where you do not want to get it wrong either, so learning the circuit is mightily important.

"I have been out on the bike at Brands Hatch to give it a final shake down and it is looking good. I have just got a week or so to wait now and the nerves are starting to kick in."

Mercer will head to the island next week with the first practice sessions getting under way on May 30.

FOOTBALL



APPEAL: Maidstone United are hoping for a boost in funds to build their proposed new ground

Party to raise funds for Stones' stadium

MAIDSTONE United are hosting a fund-raising party on Saturday evening as part of their bid to boost the club's funds to build their proposed new stadium at James Whatman Way.

The event will take place at The Orchard Spot pub at Downswood, near Maidstone, which has been provided free of charge.

All proceeds made from the event will be added to the £4,215 raised so far by the Bring the Stones Home campaign.

Supporter and fanzine editor Bryan Reed embarked on his fundraising challenge this week by travelling the length of Great Britain on a Vespa moped.

The Stones supporter will complete a 1,900 mile journey, which will take him from Maidstone to John O' Groats via Land's End and a return trip to Maidstone.

Proceeds will be split between the Maidstone ground appeal and Demelza House. Meanwhile, defender Ben Lewis has registered to play for Margate next season.

Stones boss disappointed as winger Darts to rivals

FOOTBALL

BY TOM HOWARD

LIVELY winger Elliot Bradbrook is the first player to leave Maidstone United in the close season after signing a lucrative move to Ryman Premier League rivals Dartford.

The midfielder, who spent two spells at Maidstone United in his career, was one of the star performers from last season.

Bradbrook, joined the club last summer and featured heavily on the left wing, chipping in with five goals in a turbulent season for the Stones.

Maidstone joint-manager Lloyd Hume is disappointed to see Bradbrook leave the club and admitted it was going to be hard to keep a player of his talent with a reduced budget.

He said: "We offered him a new deal as we were desperate to keep hold of him for next season.

"However, Dartford, who are one of those clubs doing well at the moment, were able to offer him a much better deal, which we could not match.

"It is very disappointing to see him go as he has been great for us and I am sure it was a hard decision for him to make after spending two spells with us."

Hume was able to confirm six players from the existing squad have put pen to paper on



Picture: STEVE TERRELL

DEPARTED Winger Elliot Bradbrook (in gold) has joined rivals Dartford after a successful season with the Stones

new deals at the club. Defenders Ashley Ulph, Nathan Paul and Roland Edge were the first to sign new contracts. Midfield duo Jay Saunders and James Peacock followed shortly after.

Finally, former Margate striker James

Pinnock, who finished top scorer with 12 goals last season, has committed to a second season with the club.

Hume is expecting to hear from the rest of the squad he has offered new deals to, later this month.

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See video previews as Gills prepare for the play-off final at Wembley

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